

The Hidden Hand of the Breastplate™

The Hidden Hand Gesture: A Consistent Symbolic
Code in Art, Portraiture, Tefillin, and Crypto-Jewish
Memory

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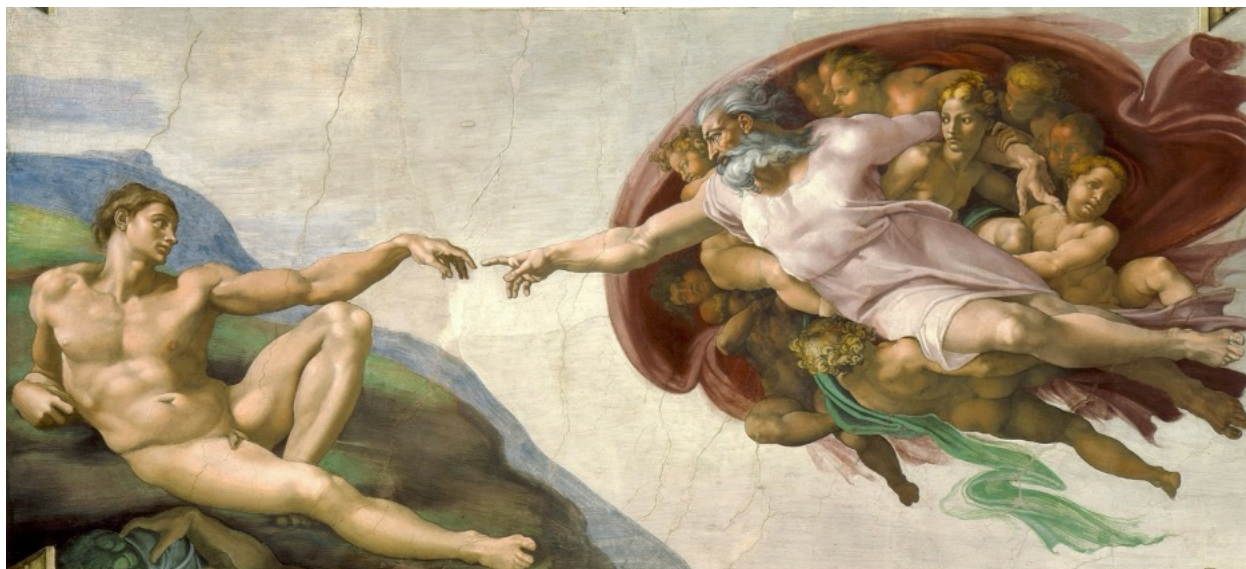
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**Figure D2. Adam, A (Shin-like) Hand Gesture - and God, A (Shin-like) Hand Gesture.
The Creation of Adam, By Michelangelo**



1) Executive Summary

This white paper examines the recurring “hidden hand” gesture, a subtle yet distinctive pose that often pairs the middle and ring fingers while the index and

Figure D3. Tefillin (Shel Yad), Close View



little fingers remain apart, a gesture that has appeared across centuries of art, from paintings and sculpture to modern photography. Far more than a mere visual code or stylistic quirk, this motif draws on deep currents of Jewish spiritual symbolism. At the heart of this tradition are the Hebrew letters Shin (ש) and Vav (ו), which carry profound meanings, especially in the context of the ritual of Tefillin. The biblical commandment, “And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes” (Deut. 6:8), anchors this visual tradition in the act of physically binding one’s actions and thoughts to divine instruction.

Not the Priestly Blessing:

It is important to distinguish the hidden hand gesture from the well-known Priestly Blessing sign (familiar today as the “Vulcan salute”), which splits the middle

Figure D1. Priestly Blessing, in the synagogue of Enschede



and ring fingers to form the shape of Shin. The hidden hand instead pairs the middle and ring fingers, forming a different but equally meaningful configuration. Both gestures appear in historical artworks, Jewish and Christian alike, as symbols of blessing, holiness, and spiritual authority, and, in the case of the hidden hand, as subtle signs of identity and covenant.

Traditionally used by Kohanim (Jewish priests) during blessings. In several works of art, both Jewish and Christian, figures are depicted with this distinctive split-finger gesture as a symbol of blessing, holiness, or spiritual authority. For example, Figure D1. Priestly Blessing, in the Synagogue of Enschede, the “Vulcan split” is present (middle and ring fingers separated) vs. Figure D3. The “Shin-like” hidden hand gesture is present on both Adam and God (middle and ring fingers paired).

Our survey across royal courts, artists’ ateliers, and public monuments reveals the hidden hand as a discreet visual language, a “Visual Breastplate™”—used to signal lineage, protection, continuity, and belonging, especially in periods and places marked by crypto-Judaism (Marranos), social risk, or the need for covert recognition. Case studies include kings, queens, presidents, artists, and public figures from across the globe, individuals connected not just by visual codes but, as DNA evidence increasingly shows, by shared genealogical and cultural threads.

Bridging art history, ritual studies, genealogy, and genetics, this interdisciplinary project offers a new lens on the persistence and resilience of Jewish and Mediterranean heritage in unexpected places. By decoding the hidden hand and tracing its journey through time and across continents, this study invites

a broader conversation about cultural memory, visual language, and the enduring power of tradition, even when it is hidden in plain sight.

2) Abstract

Across eras and geographies, not only in Western portraiture but also in statues and photographs extending into modern times, we frequently see a subtle hand pose: the middle and ring fingers are paired. In contrast, the index and pinky fingers are relaxed or spread apart. This distinctive gesture appears across paintings, sculptures, and even photographic portraits, revealing a visual motif that transcends medium and persists from antiquity to the present day. Historically labeled as mannerisms or accidents, these gestures align with Jewish ritual symbolism, notably the tefillin and the Shin (ש). By examining portraits of kings, queens, mistresses, children, artists, scientists, religious figures, and public exemplars (Appendices B, C, and D), we situate the “hidden hand gesture” as a semiotic device of lineage, fidelity, and covert cultural identity. Catalogs in the appendices ground the claim empirically. We also contextualize the motif within biblical promise and royal legendry, diaspora genetics, and crypto-Jewish history, offering an interdisciplinary reading that integrates iconography, ritual semiotics, and genealogy.

3) Keywords

hidden hand motif; Shin gesture; hand gesture; hand signals; breastplate; visual breastplate; European royalty; Royalty hand gesture; lineage; iconography; crypto-Judaism; coded gesture; religious symbolism; dynastic portraiture; art

symbolism; hand symbolism; covenant; Kohanic symbolism; Marrano; hand signs art; hand gesture art; tefillin.

4) Introduction

Renaissance and early modern portraits often render hands in highly stylized positions. Medical-art historians (e.g., Lazzeri, Nicoli, & Zhang, 2019) have observed that these postures are rarely natural, implying intentional symbolism. Among these, the “hidden hand” motif—frequently pairing the middle and ring fingers is read here as symbolism drawn from Jewish ritual practice, especially the logic of tefillin (Deut. 6:8) and the Shin (ש) representing Shaddai.

In elite households where status and lineage were tightly managed, such gestures could function as a discreet visual language. In this study, **Appendix B (B1–B40)** catalogs royal and noble examples, while **Appendix C (C1–C26)** tracks public figures, sculptures, and canonical art, demonstrating the motif’s cross-cultural transmission.

This code also resonates with the lived realities of Marranos / crypto-Jews, who navigated surveillance and persecution during the Inquisition, developing covert signs and bodily codes to preserve identity. The hidden hand thus belongs to a wider semiotics of secrecy and belonging. Just as Yiddish functioned as a secret language among Jewish merchants on Europe’s trade routes, enabling safe communication and shared understanding in often hostile environments, so too did visual and physical codes, such as the hidden hand, allow for quiet affirmation of heritage and faith. These strategies, both linguistic and visual, became essential tools for survival and solidarity, weaving an undercurrent of hidden meaning through daily life and across generations.

Originality and Contribution

While some researchers have speculated about Jewish or Kohanic symbolism in hand gestures found in Western portraiture, there has been no comprehensive study that systematically connects these recurring hand configurations to the ritual binding of tefillin and the symbolic significance of the Hebrew letters Shin and Vav. This work is the first to argue that what might appear as an artistic quirk or mannerism is, in fact, a deliberate visual code rooted in Jewish ritual, particularly the practice of tefillin. By tracing the motif across portraits of royalty, nobility, artists, and notable figures, and situating it within the broader context of crypto-Judaism, genealogy, and the semiotics of the “breastplate,” this study offers a new, interdisciplinary framework. It redefines the hidden hand not simply as a mark of secrecy or status, but as a visual expression of lineage, covenant, and identity, intentionally referencing a tradition of ritual and memory that has persisted across centuries and continents.

5) Ritual & Symbolic Framework (Shin, Vav, Tefillin, Covenant)

Shin (ש) & Tefillin:

The Shin, prominent on tefillin boxes (shel rosh), evokes **Shaddai** (שדי.) The hand/arm binding (shel yad) binds action to divine instruction.

“And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes.” (Deut. 6:8)

FIGURE D3. Tefillin (Shel Yad), Close View: Arm and hand windings.

Figure D3. Tefillin (Shel Yad), Close View



As mentioned, **Figure D1. Priestly Blessing or the priestly hand (Kohanim)** separates the middle and ring fingers to form a Shin-like aperture (later popularized by Nimoy as the “Vulcan Salute”). The hidden hand motif, by contrast, pairs the middle and ring fingers with the index and pinky fingers slightly apart. This distinct configuration appears in both Jewish and Christian art contexts.

Vav (ו) as Connector & Covenant:

- The Hebrew letter Shin (ש) is formed by three vertical strokes or “branches,” each topped by a small crown (called a tag).
- Each of these three vertical lines resembles the shape of the letter Vav (ו)—a simple vertical stroke.
- So, you can think of the Shin as being made up of three Vavs joined together side by side.

Grammatical Role:

In Hebrew, the letter Vav (ו) serves as a conjunction, most commonly translated as

D6. A Genoese Noblewoman and Her Son, Anthony Van Dyck; Noblewoman with D (Priestly Hand) and Son with A (Shin-like).



“and.” It is used to join words, phrases, and ideas, making it the literal “connector” in the language. For example, “Avraham v ‘Sarah” means “Abraham and Sarah.

Spiritual and Ritual Significance:

Vav’s function as a connector takes on deeper meaning in Jewish ritual, especially in the practice of wrapping tefillin (phylacteries) during prayer.

Figure D4. Women in Blue Dress with Kohanim Hand Pose on Both Hands, Singleton Copley — D (Different code)



- Tefillin are leather boxes containing Torah verses, bound to the head and the arm.
- The tefillin shel yad (on the hand/arm) is physically bound, symbolizing action and human deeds; the tefillin shel rosh (on the head) is worn above the mind, symbolizing thought and intention.
- Vav in this context becomes a living symbol of joining: binding the mind (thought) and the hand (action), the individual and the people, the human and the divine Covenantal layer (expanded): Binding (*tefillin*) enacts brit

(covenant) a daily recommitment that one's mind (head-tefillin) and deeds (hand-tefillin) remain joined (Vav) to the commandments and to God's name (Shin/שדי). The hand pose that gathers central digits can be read as a bodily reminder of this joining.

Covenantal Meaning:

In Jewish tradition, a brit (covenant) is not merely a promise, but a binding relationship, one that is enacted and renewed through ritual. The act of putting on tefillin each morning is a daily recommitment to this brit.

- The Vav in the ritual represents this joining, not only grammatically but spiritually. Each loop of the strap is a physical “and,” linking the wearer to the commandments and to God's name (Shaddai/שדי), represented by the letter Shin.
- When the fingers are arranged or bound in a certain way (as in the “hidden hand” motif), it can be seen as a bodily reminder of this connection: the central digits (middle and ring fingers) gathered together echo the idea of unity, while the separated fingers evoke the joining of what is apart.
- To sum up, vav is more than a letter; it is a symbol of joining and relationship. It serves as a conjunction in Hebrew, meaning “and,” which symbolizes the linking of ideas, concepts, or entities. This connection can represent the relationship between God and humanity, as well as the unity of the physical and spiritual realms. In both language and ritual, it teaches that faith is not only about belief or words, but about connecting thought to action, self to all, and humanity to the divine. The hand gestures in Jewish ritual and in art capture this lesson in a form that is both visual and physical.

6) Numerology: Vav (6), the Number 6, and 666

Numerical and Symbolic Meaning: The value of Vav is 6, and Shin is 300 (in gematria), but symbolically, the Shin's three Vavs represent connection and completeness. The number 6 is often seen as a representation of imperfection or incompleteness in Jewish thought. It is one less than 7, which is considered a number of divine perfection and completion.

- The number 6 is sometimes linked to humanity, as it is the number of days in which God created the world before resting on the seventh day. This connection emphasizes the human experience and the challenges faced in the material world.
- Vav means “and” or “connector.” When three Vavs are joined (as in Shin), it's a visual emblem of unity, continuity, and the linking of multiple concepts or realms.
- In Jewish mysticism, the Shin is associated with God's name (Shaddai), and the three Vavs are sometimes interpreted as connecting the physical, emotional, and spiritual realms, or past, present, and future.

The number 666:

- Biblical Reference: The number 666 is famously mentioned in the Book of Revelation in the Christian Bible as the "number of the beast." In Jewish mysticism, it can be interpreted in various ways.
- Symbolism of Imperfection: In a Jewish context, 666 can symbolize the ultimate expression of imperfection or the material world's challenges. It may represent the struggle against spiritual adversities and the need for redemption.

- Kabbalistic Interpretation: Some Kabbalistic interpretations suggest that 666 can also be seen as a call to elevate the material aspects of life towards holiness, emphasizing the importance of spiritual growth and connection to God.

The symbolism of 666:

- Interpretation: In some Jewish mystical traditions, the number 666 can be interpreted as a representation of the material world and its challenges. It can also signify the need for spiritual elevation and the pursuit of holiness, which is embodied in the practice of wearing Tefillin.
- Contrast with Divine Completeness: The number 666 can be seen as a reminder of the imperfections in the world, contrasting with the divine completeness represented by the number 7. This highlights the importance of striving for spiritual growth and connection through practices like Tefillin.

By tracing this motif across diasporic lineages and situating it within the broader context of identity management and crypto-Judaism, this study offers an interdisciplinary reading that has not appeared in the existing art historical or Judaic studies literature. In this sense, the present research fills a clear gap, bringing together iconographic analysis, ritual semiotics, and historical genealogy in a manner that is both novel and generative for future scholarship.

7) Methods

Selection Criteria

Included only paintings, sculptures, or engravings with clear hand positioning.
Coverage spans multiple countries, eras, and social contexts.
Each example coded by a standardized rubric differentiating Shin-like, possible, neutral decorum, and different code (e.g., oath/benediction).

Gesture Coding Rubric (Table 1)

Class	Finger Relation	Pose Quality & Alignment	Exclusions
A (Shin-Like)	Middle and ring fingers paired; index and pinky apart	Sustained, deliberate; aligns with tefillin/Shin logic	Not oath/benediction; not casual clasp
B (Possible)	Partial/ambiguous pairing	Needs higher-resolution confirmation; may be decorum if not repeatable	May be decorum if not repeatable
C (Neutral Decorum)	Conventional clasp/splay	No central pairing; courtly rhetoric	—
D (Different Code)	Other	Split or alternate ritual gesture; distinct from Shin-like	Distinct from Shin-like

Pilot Summary. 69 clear A-class instances—where the Shin-like hand gesture was unambiguous and deliberate—were identified, supporting the hypothesis of intentional symbolic encoding. **3 clear D-class instances** (the Cohen/priestly blessing hand symbol) were also observed, confirming the distinction between the hidden hand motif and other ritual gestures.

8) Findings & Case Studies

I. Royalty, Nobility, Mistresses, and Children (Appendix B, B1–B40).
The hidden hand gesture appears consistently in portraits of European royalty and their associates. Examples Include: B1–B3.
Queen Elizabeth I

Figure B1. Elizabeth I of England, the Armada Portrait (Queen's House Version)



If you spend enough time looking at portraits from Europe's royal courts, something curious starts to stand out: the hands. Kings, queens, their children, and even royal mistresses are often shown with their fingers arranged in a way that looks anything but accidental. Sometimes, the gesture is so exaggerated, like in several famous portraits of Queen Elizabeth I, that it borders on unnatural or even

Figure B2. Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I



Figure B3. Queen Elizabeth I



deformed. Yet, it's not just Elizabeth. The motif appears repeatedly: in paintings of King Charles II and his numerous mistresses, in portraits of Russian tsars and their families, and across dynasties and centuries.

Why would so many powerful people choose to be painted this way? Part of the answer may lie in the complicated world of royal family trees. For generations, Europe's monarchs married within a small circle of noble families. This led to a host

of inherited physical traits, sometimes even medical conditions from inbreeding, but it also made lineage a sensitive and sometimes mysterious topic. In these circles, who your mother was could be just as important as who your father was, especially because, in Jewish tradition, identity is passed down through the mother (except for priestly lines, where the father's ancestry matters too). For a royal child, a queen, or even a mistress, lineage could shape your destiny, your status, and your place in history.

That's where the hand gesture comes in. The Shin-like pose, a nod to the Hebrew letter associated with protection, blessing, and identity, may have served as a kind of visual "breastplate." Just as the biblical breastplate represented the twelve tribes and their families, this gesture functioned as a visible sign of tribal or familial affiliation, heritage, and loyalty. It was a way to wear your lineage, your aspirations, or even your secrets on your sleeve or, more literally, on your hand. For some, it might have been a signal of legitimacy or spiritual aspiration; for others, perhaps a subtle reference to a hidden Jewish or Israelite connection, especially in an era when open difference could be dangerous.

What is especially telling is that this gesture isn't limited to the kings and queens themselves; it appears in portraits of their children, their consorts, and their mistresses, people who often came from outside the royal bloodline. That consistency suggests the hand pose wasn't just the result of genetics or accident. Instead, it looks more like a carefully maintained code, passed down and shared within, and sometimes beyond, the royal household.

By tracing this gesture through the art of Europe's courts, we get a glimpse of how identity, tradition, and private stories were woven into the most public images. The hidden hand wasn't just a pose; it was a subtle but powerful statement, a "visual breastplate" that both protected and proclaimed who these people were, and sometimes, who they hoped the world might see.

Three portraits of Queen Elizabeth I display an unnatural, Shin-like hand gesture. All are classified as A (Shin-like), suggesting deliberate symbolism and continuity across her iconography.

B4–B7. King Charles II & Mistresses (John Michael Wright; Peter Lely)

Consistent Shin-like configurations are observed across multiple portraits of King Charles II and his mistresses, painted by John Michael Wright and Peter Lely. These

Figure B4. King Charles II in Garter Robes, A (Shin-like).



gestures appear to signal dynastic identity and social belonging; again, all are classified as A (Shin-like).

Figure B5. Lucy Walter (1630–1658), as a Shepherdess, A (Shin-like)



**Figure B6. Mary Bagot, Countess of Falmouth and Dorset (1645–1679) A
(Shin-like)**



Figure B7. Mary Davis (Moll Davis) A (Shin-like)



**Figure B8. Hortense Mancini (1646–1699), Duchess of Mazarin,
A (Shin-like)**



B8–B40. Other Royals & Nobles

Portraits of European royals and nobles—including figures such as King James II, Princess Mary, and Maria de Salinas (Lady Mary Willoughby)—consistently display the Shin-like hand gesture, except B13. These works span diverse courts and dynasties, but all reflect a shared awareness of lineage and the deliberate

Figure B9. James II of England (1633–1701) with Garter Collar, Observation: A (Shin-like)



encoding of identity through gesture. Each example in this group is classified as, A (Shin-like), reinforcing the motif's role as a visual code for belonging and continuity across social and national boundaries.

Figure B10. The Right Honorable Lady Elizabeth Butler, Countess of Chesterfield, Observation: A (Shin-like)



Figure B11. King George I, Observation: A (Shin-like)



Figure B12. Jacobite Broadside – Electress Sophia and her Daughter, Observation: A (Shin-like)



**Figure B13. Henrietta Howard (1689–1767), 9th Countess of Suffolk. Observation:
Central Pairing of Right Hand, A (Shin-like) pose**



**Figure B14. Henry IV, King of France and Navarre, Observation: A
(Shin-like)**



**Figure B15. Queen Henrietta Maria of England, Observation:
A (Shin-like)**



**Figure B16. King Edward VII (1841–1910), Observation: A
(Shin-like)**



Figure B17. Catherine Parr, Observation: A (Shin-like)



**Figure B18. Marie de Médicis, Reine de France, Observation: A
(Shin-like)**



Figure B19. Catherine of Aragon, Observation: A (Shin-like)



**Figure B20. Anna Pavlovna, Queen of the Netherlands,
Observation: A (Shin-like)**



Figure B21. Archduke Maximilian, Observation: A (Shin-like)



**Figure B22. Portrait of Emperor Peter II Alexeyevich,
Observation: A (Shin-like)**



**Figure B23. Ivan the Terrible and His Son Ivan on November 16, 1581,
Observation: A (Shin-like)**



**Figure B24. Portrait of Fiodor Alexeyevich Romanov, Observation:
A (Shin-like)**



**Figure B25. King James I of England, Observation: A
(Shin-like)**



**Figure B26. Anne of Denmark (1574–1619), Observation: A
(Shin-like)**



Figure B27. Princess Mary of England and Scotland (1605–1607), Observation: A (Shin-like)



**Figure B28. King Charles I of England (1600–1649) , Observation:
A (Shin-like)**



Figure B29. King Charles I of England (1600-1649), Three-Quarter Portrait, Observation: A (Shin-like)



Figure B30. Charles of Bourbon, King of Spain, Naples, and Sicily (1716-1788), Observation: A (Shin-like)



Figure B31. Prince James as a Young Man (Jacobite Broadside) , Observation: A (Shin-like)



**Figure B32. Marie Antoinette and Her Children (1787) ,
Observation: Marie Antoinette has her right hand in A (Shin-like)
pose, the baby on her lap also has A (Shin-like) hand gesture on
left hand. The child on her left points toward the hands, as if to
signal the hidden hand gestures.**



**Figure B33. Prince James Francis Edward Stuart (1688-1690),
Observation: A (Shin-like)**



**Figure B34. Joanna of Austria (1535-1573), Observation: A
(Shin-like)**



**Figure B35. Mary Queen of Scots (1542-1587), Observation:
A (Shin-like)**



Figure B36. King Francis I and Diane de Poitiers, Observation: A (Shin-like)



**Figure B37. Alexander III and his wife Empress Maria
Fyodorovna on holiday in Copenhagen in 1893 (Alexander's Left
Hand , Observation: A (Shin-like))**



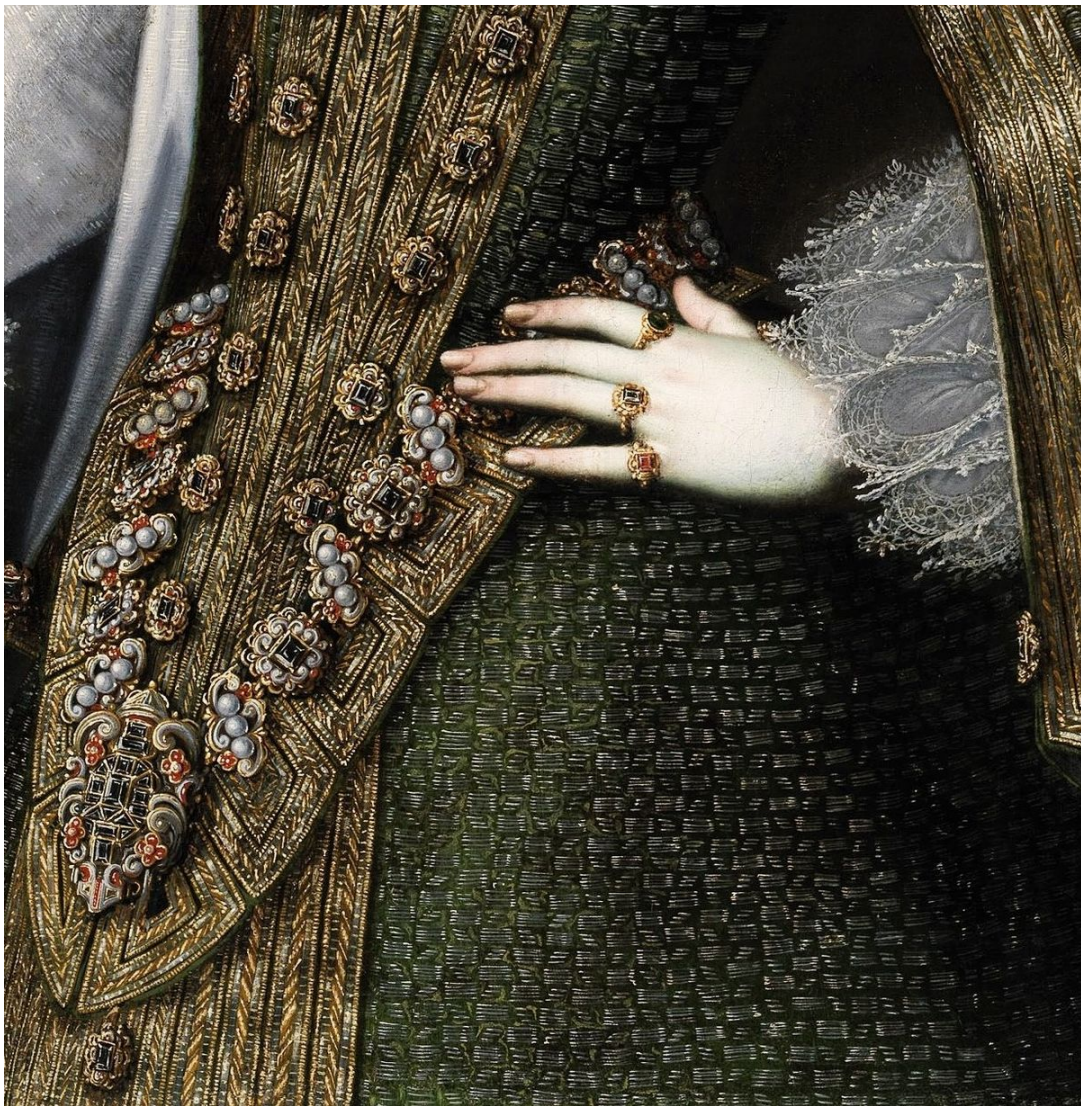
Figure B38a. María de Salinas (Lady Mary Willoughby, c. 1490–1539) Doña Juana de Salinas / Portrait of a Spanish Noblewoman



Figure B38a. María de Salinas (Lady Mary Willoughby, c. 1490–1539)

María de Salinas, later known in England as Lady Mary Willoughby, was a Spanish noblewoman and one of Catherine of Aragon's dearest friends, present at Catherine's death in 1536 despite royal orders to the contrary. Genealogical research (notably by Leo van de Pas and The Complete Peerage) **links Prince William of Wales to María and her sister Inés de Albornoz (who married Francis Guevara), tying the contemporary British royal family to the Salinas lineage.**

Figure B38b. Doña Juana de Salinas, Observation: hand close up A (Shin-like).



Scholarly sources note possible converso (Jewish) ancestry for María de Salinas, through intermarriage with the Santa Maria family of Burgos, who converted from Judaism to Christianity around 1391. The presence of Jewish-origin courtiers such as Dr. Rodrigo Gonzalez de Puebla in early 16th-century England makes it plausible that María, who arrived in 1503, shared similar roots. Her portrait exhibits the Shin-like hand gesture (A-class), symbolically weaving together themes of loyalty, hidden identity, and dynastic continuity. (Francis Guevara). Scholarship notes possible converso (Jewish) ancestry via intermarriage with the Santa Maria family of Burgos (conversions ca. 1391). The presence of Jewish-origin courtiers (e.g., Dr. Rodrigo Gonzalez de Puebla) makes converso roots plausible for a 1503 arrival in England.

II. Beyond royalty, Public Exemplars & Cultural Transmission (Appendix C, C1–C26)

This hidden presence was not only theoretical but lived, especially for the so-called "crypto-Jews" or Marranos. These were Jews on the Iberian Peninsula and elsewhere who, under the threat of the Inquisition and social persecution, outwardly converted to Christianity while secretly maintaining Jewish beliefs and practices. Marranos developed a culture of concealment, using covert signs, rituals, and gestures to preserve their identity. The persistence of subtle bodily codes, such as the hidden hand motif, can be read as part of this broader strategy of survival and memory. The legacy of the Marranos and other crypto-Jews is now recognized as a crucial part of European cultural and religious history, providing further depth to the visual languages of secrecy and belonging encoded in art.

Among the most prominent figures associated with crypto-Judaism, as well as

Figure B39. Eleanor of Toledo, Observation: A (Shin-Like) right hand.



the Pirates of the Caribbean, is Isaac Abarbanel, **Figure B39. Eleanor of Toledo, Figure B40. Cosimo I de' Medici and Figure C20. Doña Gracia Nasi Mendes.**

Isaac Abarbanel (also known as Abravanel) was a leading Jewish philosopher, statesman, and financier who moved with ease between Jewish and Christian courts in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. Widely believed to be a descendant of **King David of the bible**, Abarbanel's royal lineage was taken seriously in both his own era and by later scholars, lending prestige and authority to his leadership in times of upheaval. After the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492, the Abravanel

family resettled in Naples, where Isaac's influence continued through his

Figure B40. Cosimo I de' Medici in armour, A (Shin-like) hand.



descendants.

One remarkable figure in this family was his niece, Benvenida Abravanel, the daughter of Jacob Abravanel (Isaac's brother). Born into the prominent Abravanel family, Benvenida received an education in both Jewish and secular subjects. She married her first cousin, Samuel Abravanel, Isaac's youngest son. In Naples, Benvenida became a tutor to Eleanor of Toledo, daughter of the Spanish Viceroy of Naples, a connection that blossomed into lifelong friendship, especially after

Eleanor's marriage to Cosimo I de' Medici. While Benvenida's husband Samuel served as financial advisor to Eleanor's father, Don Pedro, Benvenida herself became known not only for her intellect and cultural influence, but also for her deep involvement in Jewish communal life and her ability to bridge worlds at a time of great transition for Spanish and Italian Jewry.

Benvenida Abravanel was not only a powerful figure in Renaissance Naples and an advocate for her community, but also a lifesaver, literally. She used her influence, resources, and networks to rescue many crypto-Jews (Marranos) fleeing persecution, helping them find safe passage and new beginnings in the Mediterranean world. Her efforts are just one chapter in the much larger, and often surprising, saga of the Jewish diaspora's resilience.

In the centuries following the expulsion from Spain, some crypto-Jews and their descendants turned to the sea, not just as merchants, but as pirates and privateers. One such figure, David Abrabanel (likely from the same distinguished family as Don Isaac Abravanel), became a legendary pirate after his family was slaughtered off the coast of South America. Taking on the name "Captain Davis," he captained his own ship, *The Jerusalem*, and joined British privateers. Some accounts even credit him with discovering Easter Island.

Jewish pirates weren't confined to the Caribbean; many worked for the Ottoman Empire as well. One of the most famous was Sinan, known to the Spanish as "The Great Jew." Born in what is now Turkey, Sinan operated out of Algiers and served as second-in-command to the infamous pirate Barbarossa. Their pirate flag bore a six-pointed star, called the Seal of Solomon by the Ottomans, a powerful symbol of Jewish identity. Sinan led the defeat of a Genoan navy hired by Spain and eventually became the supreme Ottoman naval commander, later buried in a Jewish cemetery in Albania.

Other Jewish corsairs, such as Yaakov Koriel, commanded fleets in the Caribbean, only to later return to a life of study and mysticism in Safed, where they became students of the famed kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria. There are even reports of kosher galleys, pirates abstaining from raids on the Sabbath, and secret communications written in Hebrew. In Curacao, the local rabbi famously chastised the community's pirates for mistakenly attacking a ship owned by a fellow Jew, at least, he noted, it hadn't happened on the Sabbath.

The tradition of Jewish piracy is ancient: Josephus mentions Jewish pirates in the seas off the Land of Israel during Roman times, and graffiti of a pirate ship has been found in the tomb of Jason in Jerusalem. Pirates plagued the Seleucid Empire, and even the Hasmoneans accused each other of piracy. From the coves of the Levant to the Caribbean and South America, Jews, sometimes out of necessity, sometimes in defiance of persecution, became pirates, privateers, and navigators of the world's most dangerous waters.

This vivid history reveals not only the adaptability and courage of crypto-Jews, but also the enduring power of identity, survival, and coded loyalty, whether on land or at sea.

Figure C20. Doña Gracia Nasi Mendes, also known as Doña Gracia Mendes Nasi, and Beatriz de Luna Miques, was a prominent Sephardi Jewish philanthropist and businesswoman in the 16th century. She is often depicted in art as a wealthy and influential figure of her time, known for her efforts to support Jewish communities and her escape networks during the Inquisition. One of the most influential Jewish women of the Renaissance orchestrated complex networks of safe passage and support for fellow Marranos across Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Both are emblematic of the resilience, adaptability, and creativity that characterized crypto-Jewish life.

Figure C20. Portrait of Doña Grasia Nasi Mendes (Attributed), 16th Century, Observation: A (Shin-like) left hand. Her son, left A (Shin-like) hand gesture.



Figure C4. Christopher Columbus (Cristóbal Colón).

Sephardic Crypto Jews, Columbus, and the Spanish Expulsion.

The story of Jewish migration and survival is inextricably linked to the age of exploration. Cristóbal Colón—remembered in American history as Christopher Columbus and widely believed by many scholars to be of Sephardic Jewish descent and a Crypto-Jew, set sail for the New World in 1492, the very year Spain expelled its Jewish population. The names of several crew members on his first voyage also suggest Sephardic origins, hinting at a deeper, often hidden, Jewish presence in these early chapters of American history.

The timing and circumstances surrounding Columbus's first voyage offer

Figure C4. Portrait of a Man Said to be Chistopher Columbus (Cristobol Colon), Observation: A (Shin-like) left hand.



striking evidence of a hidden Jewish narrative at the heart of one of history's most famous journeys. In the summer of 1492, as Spain's Jews faced expulsion, the harbor at Palos was crowded with ships, many carrying desperate exiles. All Jews were required to leave by July 31, but due to the overwhelming crush, a two-day

grace period was granted. Columbus's three ships were made ready just in time, and he gave his crew leave to go ashore for their last night on land, with strict instructions to return by 11 p.m. The ships set sail just before daybreak on August 3, which happened to be the evening after the 9th of Av, Tisha B'Av, the great fast day of the Jews, commemorating the destruction of both Temples in Jerusalem.

Jewish tradition holds that Tisha B'Av is the most tragic day of the year, and that **“one who works on Tisha B'Av... will never see a blessing therefrom.”** It is a day on which no observant Jew would undertake a perilous new venture. That Columbus waited until Tisha B'Av had passed before launching his voyage raises the question: was he consciously following an ancient Jewish tradition?

Further evidence emerges from the work of historian Cecil Roth, who discovered that in the margin of Pope Pius II's *Historia rerum ubique gestarum*, Columbus himself wrote: “and from the destruction of the Second House according to the Jews to the present day, being the year of the birth of our Lord 1481, are 1413 years.” Columbus used the Jewish reckoning for the destruction of the Temple, year 68, not the modern date of 70 CE, showing an intimate familiarity with Jewish chronology. Salvador de Madariaga, upon learning this detail, famously exclaimed, “That clinches it!”—convinced of Columbus's crypto-Jewish background.

While Columbus's ancestry is claimed by many nations, a wealth of circumstantial evidence, including his words, actions, and the instructions he gave to his heirs, suggests a Jewish identity that was carefully concealed. His crew included a significant number of professing Jews and Marranos (secret Jews), among them Juan de Torres, an interpreter fluent in Hebrew and Aramaic and the first European to step ashore in the New World, as well as the ship's surgeon and doctor.

Columbus's ambitions were not merely exploratory. He repeatedly appealed to Ferdinand and Isabella to liberate Jerusalem from the Turks, offering to lead a great army, and in his will, he urged his son and successors to take up the task if the crown would not. For Columbus, the New World was not just a destination but a possible sanctuary for his persecuted brethren, or even a stepping stone to reclaiming Eretz Yisrael.

The fact that Columbus set sail on the eve after Tisha B'Av, a day of mourning and hope, tragedy and new beginnings, may be the clearest clue to the secret at the heart of his voyage. For some, it is a sad day; for others, a sign of destiny.

By the mid-1500s, Spain had expelled between 100,000 to 200,000 Jews, after first confiscating much of their wealth and property. The Spanish Jews, or Sephardim, scattered in all directions: eastward to Italy and the Ottoman Empire, westward to Portugal, northward over the Pyrenees into France, and south across the Strait of Gibraltar to North Africa. Another 10,000 to 20,000 remained behind in Spain, only to be later targeted and killed by the Inquisitorial Court. An additional 30,000 converted, often only superficially, to Catholicism. Those whose insincerity was suspected faced the terror of the auto-da-fé and the bonfires of the Inquisition.

This history of forced migration, adaptation, and hidden faith is not just a story of loss but also of resilience. The Sephardic diaspora brought Jewish traditions, languages, and even genetic lineages to new lands, leaving traces from the Americas to the Mediterranean and beyond. The legacy of the expulsions and the subsequent spread of Sephardic Jews is still felt today, in family names, in genetic studies, and in the enduring spirit of Crypto-Jews.

Figure D5. Young Christopher Columbus, The Monteverde Statue (Genoa)
"The Boy Columbus."

Figure D5. Young Christopher Columbus, The Monteverde Statue (Genoa) “The Boy Columbus”. Observation: D (Different code)



This celebrated marble statue by Giulio Monteverde depicts a youthful Christopher Columbus, seated in contemplation with a globe at his feet. Most

notably, the statue shows Columbus's hand in the distinctive Priestly blessing position, fingers parted between the middle and ring fingers. This gesture, traditionally performed by Kohanim (Jewish priests) during blessings, has deep roots in Jewish ritual and symbolism.

Significance:

Some independent researchers and writers interested in crypto-Judaism have noted that the hand gesture in Monteverde's Colombo Giovinetto statue closely resembles the traditional **(Priestly Blessing)** sign. While this interpretation has not been widely discussed in mainstream art historical literature, it adds an intriguing layer to the conversation about Columbus's possible Jewish ancestry and the use of encoded symbolism in public art.

Figure C19. St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) — Founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

Another intriguing figure in the context of crypto-Judaism and symbolic gesture is Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and a leading religious figure of the Counter-Reformation. While some period observers and later writers have speculated about possible Jewish ancestry or cryptic Jewish identity among elite European circles, including Loyola himself, the theme of layered Jewish influence is most famously discussed by Benjamin Disraeli. Disraeli, who was of Jewish descent and twice Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, suggests in his novel *Coningsby* (1844) that Jewish families and individuals have had profound, though sometimes hidden, influence within the highest levels of European institutions. In the book, the character Sidonia remarks on the power, mobility, and resilience of Jews in shaping European finance, politics, and culture. Portraits of Ignatius of Loyola, such as the renowned painting by Peter Paul Rubens, often depict him with a hand gesture closely related to the hidden hand motif discussed

Figure C19. St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), Founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), Observations: A (Shin-like).



in this study. This visual code is not unique to Loyola's portraits; Rubens himself, as well as several of his sitters, are frequently shown with the hidden hand gesture, demonstrating how this symbol persisted among both religious reformers and secular elites. Notable examples include Rubens's *The Honeysuckle Bower* (where Rubens and his wife Isabella Brant both display the gesture), his portrait of the Duke of Lerma, and several others among Rubens's extensive body of portraiture.

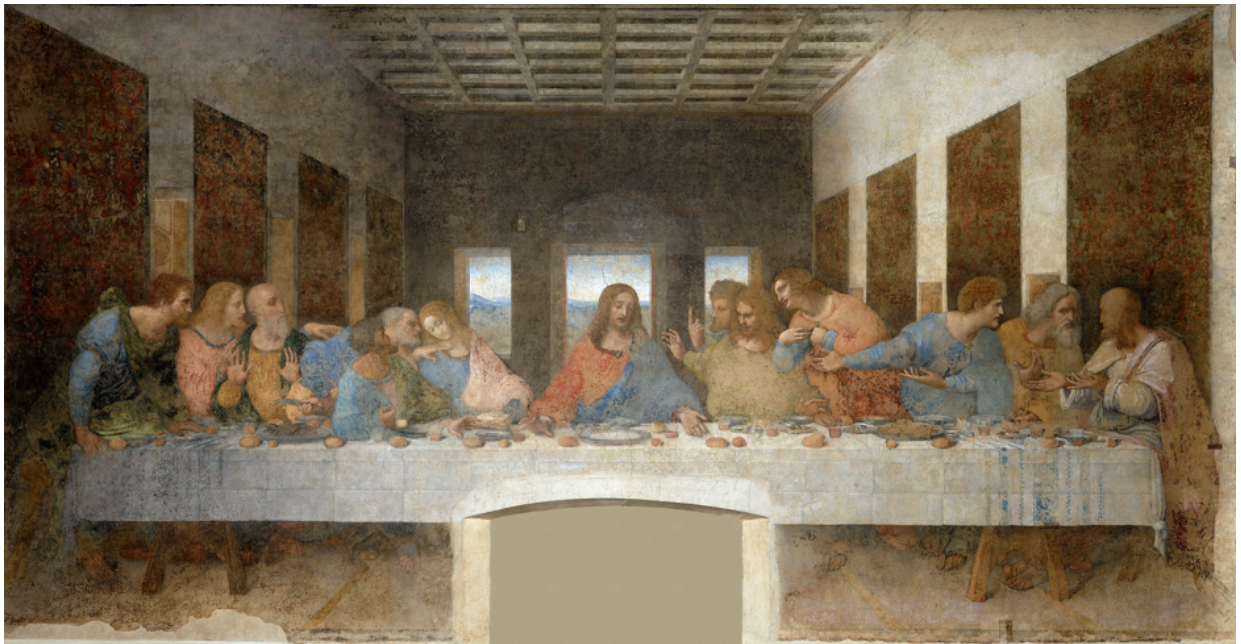
The recurrence of the hidden hand motif in Rubens's work and its appearance in depictions of Ignatius of Loyola suggest that these symbolic codes were woven into the visual vocabulary of power, faith, and identity in early modern Europe.

Whether as a sign of covert heritage, personal spirituality, or participation in a wider tradition of coded gesture, these artworks testify to the enduring and adaptable nature of the hidden hand, bridging the worlds of Jewish diaspora, Christian reform, and elite European society.

C1. The Last Supper — Observation: Jesus in the center has both hands in **A (Shin-like)** pose.

Leonardo Da Vinci's fascination with hand symbolism is evident throughout his

C1. The Last Supper



art. In The Last Supper, multiple apostles are depicted with hand gestures that echo the A (Shin-like) configuration. This repetition underlines the subtle consistency and depth of the motif in both religious and secular masterpieces.

Figure C2. Pietà by Michelangelo — Observation: A (Shin-like). Renaissance sculptor, painter, and architect. In the Pietà and selected frescoes and drawings, Michelangelo's figures are depicted with intentional, emblematic hand

C2. Michelangelo — Pietà, Observation: the right hand of Jesus has the A (Shin-like) hand gesture. Mary's left and right hand also has the A (Shin-like) hand gesture.



arrangements. Notably, several works display the central fingers paired and the outer fingers separated, forming a Shin-like configuration that echoes the motif explored in this study.

C3. Venus de' Medici — Observation: Grouped fingers reminiscent of later codes, pointing to antiquity roots, Venus de' Medici, 1st century BCE. Marble sculpture first century BCE.

**Figure C3. Venus De' Medici,
Observation: A (Shin-Like) ,
1st Century BCE.**



Figure C5. Pocahontas (Matoaka, Rebecca Rolfe) — Observation: A (Shin-like).

Her story also intersects with a broader fascination among early modern and colonial thinkers about the origins and identities of Native Americans. Dutch rabbi, scholar, and diplomat Manasseh ben Israel, in *The Hope of Israel* (1650), famously

C5. Pocahontas (Matoaka, Rebecca Rolfe)



argued that the discovery of the Native Americans represented a surviving remnant of the Assyrian exile, an idea he believed signaled the approach of the messianic era. This hypothesis gained traction among Christian writers as well, including

Thomas Thorowgood, who published "Jewes in America," and influential colonial figures such as Cotton Mather, **Figure C7. Elias Boudinot**, a leader of the American Revolution, and the Quaker leader William Penn. Their speculations about lost tribes and the spiritual destiny of the Americas reflect the period's complex interplay of theology, identity, and the search for meaning in New World encounters.

Figure C6. Queen Elizabeth I — Observation: Right hand with unnatural A

C6. Queen Elizabeth I



(Shin-like) pose.

Figure C7. Elias Boudinot IV — Observation: Right hand over wrist; soft middle–ring pairing; index/pinky slightly apart; sustained pose, **A (Shin-like)**.

Figure C7. Elias Boudinot IV



Figure C8. Mona Lisa (Lisa Gherardini). — **Observation:** The Mona Lisa's hand gently pairs the middle and ring fingers, creating a silhouette resembling the Hebrew letter Shin, **A (Shin-like)**. This pose comes into detail as those fingers curve together; the index and little fingers spread slightly, forming an arch. The

Figure C8. Mona Lisa (Lisa Gherardini)



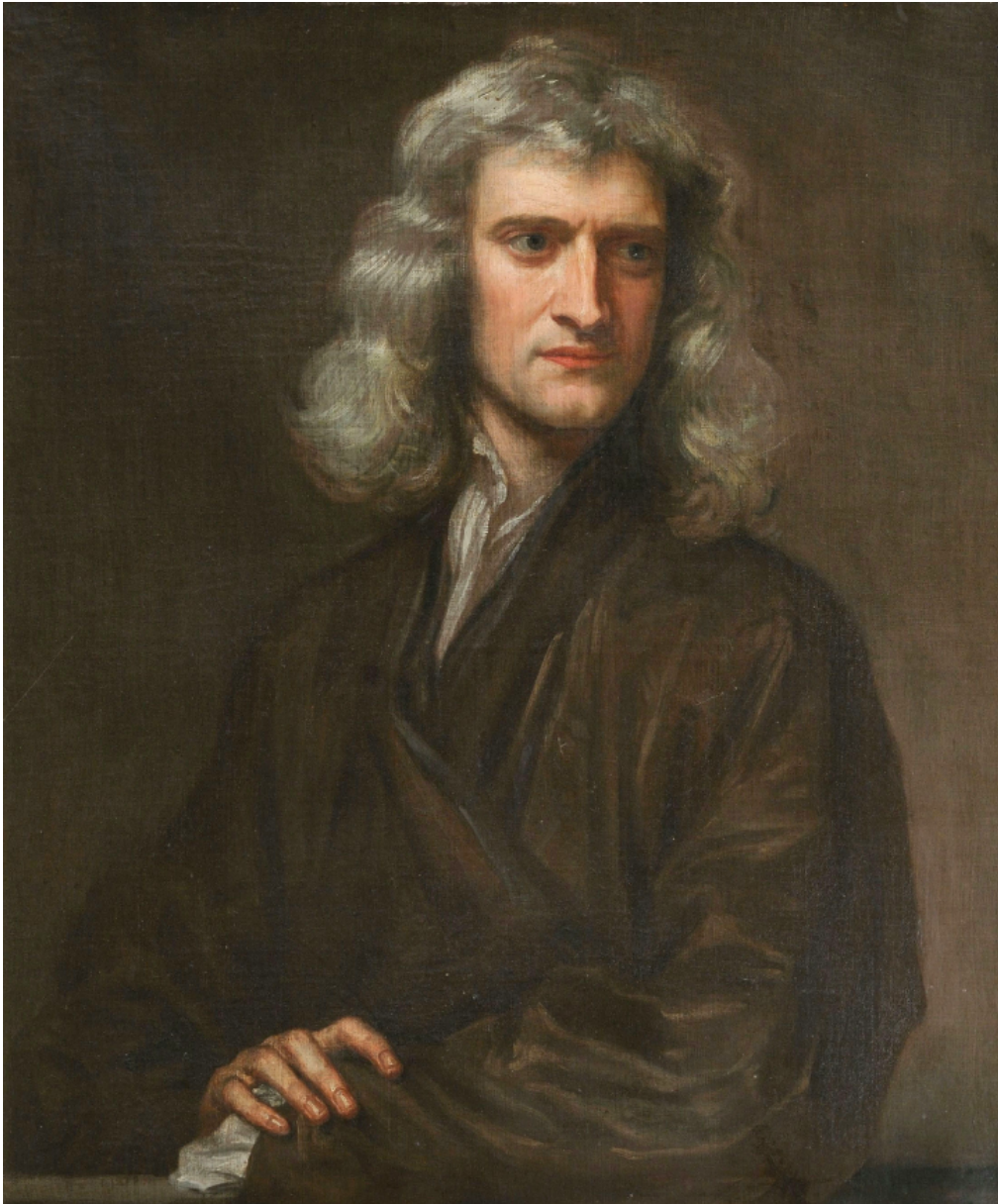
index finger, relaxed, subtly echoes the lines of a Shin. The palm rests serenely on the soft fabric of her dress. Thus, the hand is read as a sign of a covenant.

Lisa Gherardini (1479–1542) belonged to the Gherardini, a prominent Florentine house with fortified holdings in Valdelsa, Valdigreve, and Bucciano, traced to Remberto (c. 910). Civil conflicts repeatedly pushed branches into exile.

In 1170, brothers Maurice, Thomas, and Gerard left Florence for English service; by 1182, they joined Henry II's Irish campaign (sanctioned by Pope Alexander III). In Ireland, the family intermarried with the FitzGerald, producing the Geraldines (Earls of Kildare and Desmond). A 1566 letter from Girolamo Fortini to Paolo Fortini references Gerald, Lord of Kildare, "Signore Gherardini, Conte di Childaria"—and mentions gifts of hunting dogs, evidencing ongoing Florence and Ireland ties. Lisa's family life reflected many of the complexities of Renaissance Florence. Her daughter, Marietta, entered the convent of Sant'Orsola, a common path for women of her social class, which could signal both religious devotion and strategic family decisions regarding inheritance, alliances, and social standing. The presence of a daughter in the convent also underlines the family's proximity to ecclesiastical structures, further entwining their story with the religious and political currents of the era. The political and cultural landscape of Renaissance Florence was marked not only by power struggles but also by a growing critique of church corruption. Influential figures such as the Medici, Machiavelli, and Leonardo da Vinci, and by extension, those in their circles, including Francesco del Giocondo and the Gherardini family, often found themselves navigating a complex relationship with both secular and ecclesiastical authorities. Many in Florence aspired to reform what they saw as a deeply corrupt church, advocating for change either openly or through more discreet means. Within this environment, the use of symbolic gestures and coded visual language in portraiture may have served both as a means of subtle protest and as a way to assert personal or familial identity amid shifting religious and political tides.

Figure C9. Sir Isaac Newton — Observation: Half-length copies: right hand

Figure C9. Isaac Newton



across left forearm; gentle central pairing (copy-dependent).

Figure C10. John Wesley — Observation: Right hand to chest; central digits held together. Church of England Cleric, founder of the Methodist Movement.

Figure C10. John Wesley



Figure C11. Giles of Viterbo — Observation: Right hand on an open book, with the middle and ring fingers paired. Cardinal of the Catholic Church. Studied the Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism.

Figure C11. Giles of Viterbo



Figure C12. Robert Fludd — Observation: Right hand on breast; middle–ring pairing, A (Shin-like). English occultist, astrologer, mathematician, and Hermetic writer.

Figure C12. Robert Fludd



Figure C13. Christopher Smart — Observation: Right hand on breast, middle-ring finger pairing, demonstrating A (Shin-like), configuration. English poet and notorious member of the Freemasons, as well as a Masonic author.

Figure C13. Christopher Smart



Figure C14. Statue of Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel (Maharal) —

Observation: Right hand on right side, middle–ring finger pairing. The replica features a plaque that states the statue's theme is the Maharal's death. His death is symbolized by the nude young girl holding out a rose "whose scent brings about his end". There is a small dog on the statue's other side, but no description of the

**Figure C14. Statue of Rabbi Judah Loew
ben Bezalel (Maharal)**



meaning of the dog is given. Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, also known as the Maharal of Prague, was a prominent Jewish scholar, mystic, and philosopher who lived from 1512 to 1609. He is best known for his teachings on Jewish philosophy and mysticism, as well as the legendary creation of the Golem of Prague to protect the Jewish community.

Figure C15. The Transfiguration — Observation: Depiction of Jesus with a hidden hand, **A (Shin-like)** configuration on both hands, and others below Jesus with a hidden **A (Shin-like)** configuration.

Figure C15. The Transfiguration



Figure C16. Christ Carrying the Cross — Observation. Prominent hand gestures. **A (Shin-like).**

Figure C16. Christ Carrying the Cross



Figure C17. Charles Lennox — Observation. Left hand to abdomen; A (Shin-like), configuration; 1st Duke of Richmond; Freemason; illegitimate son of Charles II.

Figure C17. Charles Lennox



**Figure: C18. El Greco, Nobleman with his Hand on his Chest — Observation;
A (Shin-like).**

Throughout art history, the recurring hidden hand motif has not only appeared in portraits of royalty and notables but also in representations of the artists themselves. From the Renaissance onward, membership in artists' guild, such as the Florentine Accademia, the Guild of Saint Luke in Antwerp, or the Painter-

Figure C18. The Nobleman with his Hand on his Chest



Stainers' Company in London, conferred both social status and access to elite circles. These organizations were more than professional associations; they were

networks of shared knowledge, symbols, and, at times, secrets. Artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Anthony van Dyck, Peter Paul Rubens, Peter Lely, and Michelangelo were all deeply involved in such guilds and were known for their mastery of both technical skill and coded visual language.

The hidden hand gesture, or Shin-like pose, reappears repeatedly, not only in their commissioned portraits of patrons and rulers, but also in self-portraits, statues, and even early photographic images. Whether carved in marble, painted on canvas, or sketched in caricature, the gesture seems to have functioned not only as a subtle sign of guild membership or professional identity, but also as a visual reference to the ancient “Breastplate”—a symbol of tribal affiliation and familial lineage among the Israelites. Within the context of these artistic fraternities, the hidden hand may have served as a marker of shared heritage, a quiet nod to ancestral tribes and family continuity, and perhaps even as a sign of esoteric knowledge passed down through both bloodlines and creative tradition. The motif’s persistence across statues, paintings, cartoons, and photographs—spanning from the Renaissance workshops of da Vinci and Michelangelo, through the baroque studios of Rubens and Van Dyck, to the elegant society portraits of Lely—suggests that the hidden hand was more than a private code. It was part of a visual tradition, woven into the very fabric of artistic self-representation and the legacy of the guilds themselves.

Figure C21. Sculptor Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, Figure C25 and C24, Statue of Liberty, both carry the A (Shin-like) left-hand pose.

Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, the French sculptor best known for designing the Statue of Liberty, is himself part of the visual tradition explored in this study. Portraits and photographs of Bartholdi often show him with his hand posed in a manner reminiscent of the Shin-like configuration: the central fingers brought

Figure C25. Sculpture Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, Observation: A (Shin-Like) Pose



together, the outer fingers separated. Whether deliberate or unconscious, this gesture links Bartholdi to a long line of artists, intellectuals, and public figures who employed subtle hand symbolism as a mark of identity, heritage, or coded association.

Bartholdi's masterpiece, the Statue of Liberty (Liberty Enlightening the World), also participates in this tradition. Close examination of Lady Liberty's left hand, the hand holding the book, reveals that her fingers are arranged in a distinct grouping: the index and middle fingers are paired, as are the ring and little fingers, creating a subtle echo of the Shin-like motif central to this work. The Statue of Liberty,

intended as a symbol of enlightenment, freedom, and hope for generations of immigrants (including many Jews fleeing persecution), thus also embodies a visual

C24. Statue of Liberty, Observation: A (Shin-like).



lineage that stretches from biblical ritual to the modern age, quietly inscribed in the hands of both the artist and his creation.

Figure C21. Portrait of President John Adams in the Drafting Committee of the Declaration of Independence — One of the signers of the Declaration of

Figure C21. Portrait of President John Adams in the Drafting Committee of the Declaration of Independence, Observation: A (Shin-like)



Independence. The picture depicts the five-man drafting committee of the Declaration of Independence presenting their work to the Congress.

Figure C22. Portrait of Augustus, Duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenberg (1772-1822), Observation: left arm in the air with A (Shin-like) hand gesture.

was consort to Queen Victoria, and maternal grandfather to Prince Albert.

Figure C22. Augustus, Duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenberg (1772-1822)

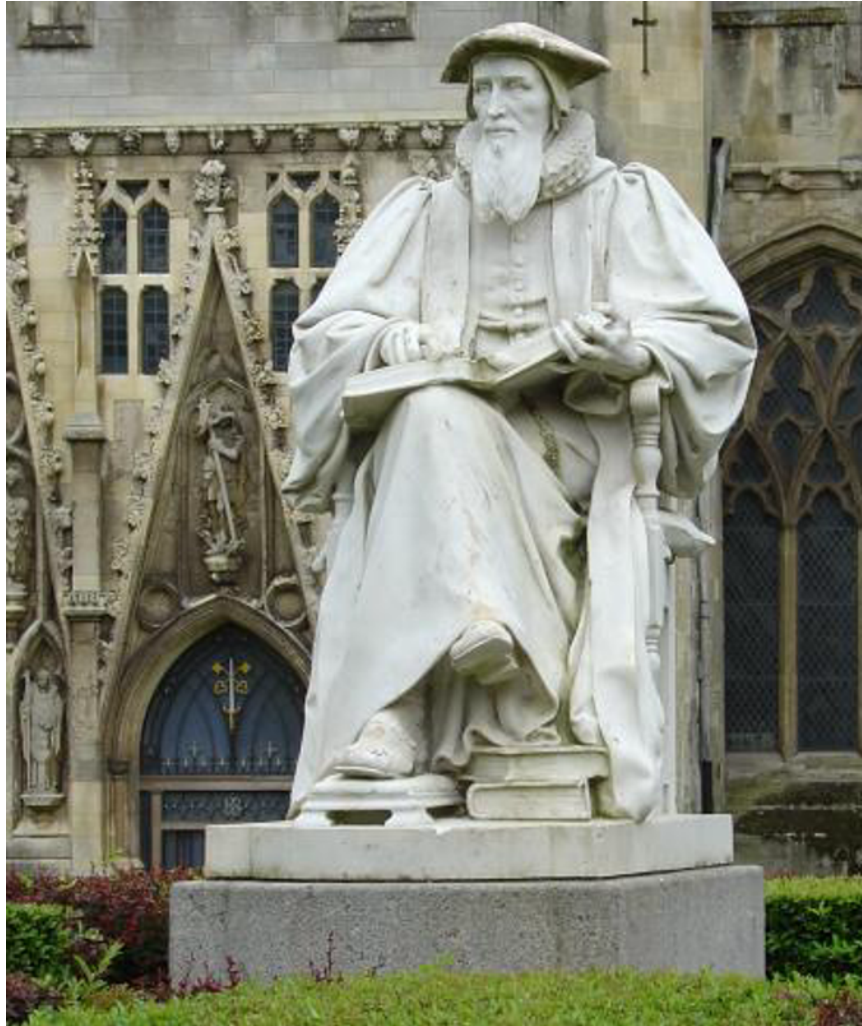


Figure C23a. And C23b. Richard Hooker — Observation: A (Shin-like).

Influential English theologian and early Anglican thinker.

This portrait, formerly attributed to Richard Hooker, depicts a late 16th–early 17th

C23a. Statue of Richard Hooker



century English clergyman with his right hand resting on his chest, central digits gently paired in a manner suggestive of the Shin-like gesture discussed in this study.

**Figure C23b. Portrait of Richard Hooker (Formerly
Attributed) Observation: A (Shin-like)**



9) Biblical Promise, Royal Lineage & Cultural Connections

Abrahamic Promise: “I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.” (Genesis 17:6)

Legends of British-Israel Continuity:

Throughout history, many royal genealogies, especially those of Britain, have drawn on the biblical tradition, claiming descent from the ancient Israelites. In both legend and historical narrative, a direct link is suggested between British royalty and the House of David. Notably, one enduring story holds that after the destruction of the First Temple, King Zedekiah's daughters were taken to safety by the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 43:6). According to this narrative, one daughter, often called Tea-Tephi, married a descendant of Joseph and established a royal line in Ireland, which eventually extended to Britain. This mythic tradition is particularly significant given the Hebrew practice of reckoning Jewish identity through the maternal line, thereby suggesting a legitimate transmission of Israelite heritage through these royal daughters. The legend of Tea-Tephi is also woven into the symbolism surrounding the Stone of Scone (or Stone of Destiny), which British monarchs have used in their coronations and which some associate with Jacob's biblical pillar stone.

Adding a genetic dimension to these royal connections, recent studies have shown that the DNA of King Tutankhamun, a pharaoh of ancient Egypt—belongs to haplogroup R1b1. Intriguingly, this is the same major Y-DNA lineage found in most Western European royal and noble families, including a significant proportion of British and Irish males today. While caution is needed in drawing direct lines from ancient Egypt to the modern British throne, such findings highlight the complex web of ancestry and migration that has shaped European and Middle Eastern dynasties.

Cultural and Religious Touchpoints:

The Israeli Embassy in London is located on Crown land, a symbolic gesture of ongoing connection.

- Britain played a pivotal role in the creation of the modern Jewish state, further intertwining the destinies of these peoples.
- Royal heirs have reportedly been circumcised by a mohel (Jewish ritual circumciser), and some accounts mention rabbinic visits to the royal household, especially on the eve of Shabbat.
- Scriptural allusions continue to surface in royal life; for example, the reading of the Song of Solomon at Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's wedding.

These traditions, legends, and historical touchpoints reflect a centuries-old fascination with the idea of royal and biblical convergence. This theme continues to inspire both scholarly inquiry and cultural imagination.

The Stone of Scone: Symbolism and Legend

The Stone of Scone, or Stone of Destiny, is a block of red sandstone historically used in the coronation of Scottish and, later, British monarchs. For

centuries, it was kept at Scone Abbey near Perth, Scotland, before being taken to Westminster Abbey in 1296 by Edward I and placed beneath the Coronation Chair. It was returned to Scotland in 1996 and now resides at Edinburgh Castle, but is still brought to Westminster for coronations.

According to enduring legend, the Stone of Scone is none other than the biblical Jacob's Pillow, the stone upon which Jacob rested his head and received his vision of the ladder to heaven (Genesis 28). In British-Israelite tradition, the stone was said to have been brought from the Holy Land to Ireland by the prophet Jeremiah, along with King Zedekiah's daughter Tea-Tephi, and eventually to Scotland and England. This mythic journey is invoked to support the idea of a direct, sacred link between the British throne and the House of David.

While there is no historical evidence to confirm the stone's Levantine or Israelite origin, geological studies show it is native to Scotland, and the symbolic association with biblical heritage remains powerful. The stone's presence at every British coronation since the Middle Ages continues to inspire both national pride and fascination with the idea of royal and biblical convergence.

10) Jewish DNA, Diaspora & Global Connections

Jewish identity has never been solely a matter of faith or ritual; it is a story of movement, survival, and extraordinary genetic diversity shaped by centuries of migration and adaptation. As the influential rabbi and diplomat Manasseh ben Israel wrote in the 17th century, the restoration of the Jewish people and their return to their ancestral land would only come "once they had spread all over the world." This vision proved prophetic. During waves of expulsions from Spain, Portugal, England, France, and elsewhere between the late 1300s and 1700s, Jewish families, both openly and as crypto-Jews, traveled to every corner of the

globe, establishing new communities from Europe and North Africa to the Middle East and the Americas.

Manasseh ben Israel was not only a leading rabbi, printer, and diplomat of his time, but he was also profoundly interested in messianic questions and the mystical dimensions of Jewish destiny. He was convinced of the Davidic origin of the Abravanel family, from which his own wife was descended, and he was steeped in kabbalistic thought (though he carefully avoided expounding mystical ideas in works intended for non-Jewish audiences).

Central to Manasseh's worldview was the belief that the long-awaited restoration of the Jewish people to the Holy Land could not occur until Jews had spread to every part of the world. This conviction was strengthened in 1644 when he met Antonio de Montesinos (Aaron Levi), who claimed that the North American Indians were descendants of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel. Inspired by this encounter, Manasseh published *The Hope of Israel* (1650), in which he argued that the global dispersion of the Jews, and their discovery in the New World, was a sign that the messianic age was near. Manasseh's messianic vision also motivated his diplomatic efforts. He corresponded with Queen Christina of Sweden, ostensibly about Hebrew learning, but likely with the underlying goal of gaining her support for Jewish readmission to Sweden. Queen Christina herself was fascinated by questions of biblical genealogy and believed she was descended from Magog, further deepening their exchange. Most of all, Manasseh focused his energy on securing the readmission of Jews to England, believing this would be a crucial step toward redemption. He entered into active correspondence with Oliver Cromwell and leading English theologians, tirelessly advocating for the rights and return of his people.

Through his scholarship, diplomatic engagement, and spiritual vision, Manasseh ben Israel became a symbol of the resilience, adaptability, and hope of

the Jewish diaspora—connecting ancient lineage, kabbalistic ideas, and the realities of migration and survival in the early modern world.

Christopher Columbus's DNA and Ancestry

Recent genetic research has renewed the debate over the origins of Christopher Columbus, whose birthplace and heritage have been subjects of controversy for centuries. Traditionally celebrated as a Genoese Italian, Columbus's identity is now being reconsidered in light of DNA evidence and historical context.

Key DNA Findings:

- **Confirmation of Remains:**

In 2003, researchers exhumed remains attributed to Columbus from Seville Cathedral. DNA analysis compared these remains with those of his son, Hernando Colón, and his brother, Diego, confirming familial relationship and authenticity (Rossi et al., 2012).

- **Iberian and Jewish Connection:**

Genetic markers from the bone samples indicate a strong connection to the Iberian Peninsula, rather than Italy. This supports theories that Columbus may have been of Sephardic Jewish descent, part of a community that faced persecution and expulsion from Spain in the late 15th century.

- **Challenging the Genoa Narrative:**

While Genoa is still officially recognized as Columbus's birthplace, genetic and documentary evidence have prompted renewed interest in other possible origins, including Galicia and Mallorca in Spain. Some historians propose that Columbus's family were conversos, Jews who converted to Catholicism to avoid the Inquisition.

- **Historical Implications:**

These findings challenge the long-held narrative of Columbus's Italian origins and highlight the complex, multicultural, and often hidden identities in late medieval Europe. They also echo the broader story of the Sephardic diaspora and the survival of Jewish traditions under persecution.

Limitations and Ongoing Debate:

- The results, though compelling, have not yet been fully peer-reviewed or universally accepted by all historians and geneticists.
- Further analysis and confirmation—potentially using more advanced DNA sequencing or additional family remains- may be needed to draw definitive conclusions about Columbus's ancestry.

Bedouins: Nomads of the Desert

The Bedouins of the Middle East are unique for maintaining many ancient Semitic customs, a fact now supported by both genetic and ethnographic research. Genetically, Bedouin men are most commonly Y-DNA haplogroup J1—a lineage strongly associated with Semitic-speaking peoples and shared with many Jewish and Arab populations since antiquity. On the maternal side, Bedouins carry a mix of mitochondrial haplogroups, including H, J, U, K, T, N1b, and M1, reflecting their deep connections with both the Levant and North Africa.

These genetic findings align closely with cultural observations. In *Nomads of the Nomads* (1975), anthropologist Donald P. Cole spent extended periods living with the Al Murrah Bedouin of the Arabian Empty Quarter. Cole documented remarkable parallels between Bedouin practices and those described in ancient Hebrew scripture, including hospitality customs, marriage and family organization,

dietary laws, oral storytelling, and religious rituals, all of which echoed the traditions of the biblical world. He found that, despite centuries of change and migration, the Bedouin had preserved what appeared to be a living legacy of ancient Semitic, and possibly Hebrew, ways of life.

Together, the genetic data and Cole's immersive fieldwork provide a powerful portrait of continuity. They suggest that the Bedouin not only share ancestral roots with Jews and other peoples of the region, but also embody, in daily life, many of the values and traditions described in the Bible. This makes the Bedouin a vital link to understanding the shared heritage and enduring connections of the peoples of the ancient Near East.

Bedouin DNA: Y-DNA and mtDNA

Y-DNA (Paternal Line)

J1 (M267): The most common Y-DNA haplogroup among Bedouins, especially in the Arabian Peninsula, Israel, Jordan, and Sinai.

J1 is strongly associated with Semitic populations (Arabs, Jews, and some groups in the Levant).

In some Bedouin groups, J1 is found in up to 70–90% of men.

E1b1b: Found at lower frequencies, particularly in Bedouins from North Africa or the Sinai.

Other haplogroups (R1b, J2, T): Present at minor frequencies, reflecting broader Middle Eastern admixture.

mtDNA (Maternal Line)

H, J, U, K, T, N1b, and M1: The main mtDNA haplogroups among Bedouins, similar to other Middle Eastern and Mediterranean populations.

Haplogroup M1: Sometimes found at notable frequencies, especially in Bedouins of the Sinai and North Africa, reflecting ancient connections with the Horn of Africa and Egypt.

N1b: Present and of interest, since it is also a founding lineage among Ashkenazi Jews and other Near Eastern groups.

Genetic Studies & References

Bedouins are genetically closest to other Semitic-speaking peoples of the Middle East: Arabs, Jews (both Ashkenazi and Mizrahi), and Druze.

They show evidence of ancient population continuity in the Levant and Arabian Peninsula.

Modern Genetics

Modern genetics shows rich **Y-DNA** (J1, J2, E1b1b, R1a, R1b, T) and **mtDNA** (K, H, U, J, T, N1b, M1, X) diversity across **Ashkenazi, Sephardic, and Mizrahi** Jews, with overlaps in non-Jewish populations, evidence of **migration, conversion, and intermarriage**. While mtDNA haplogroup X is not among the most common lineages in Jewish populations, it has been detected at low frequencies in Ashkenazi, Sephardic, and Mizrahi Jews. This rare lineage, also found in the Near East, Mediterranean, and some Native American groups, highlights the far-reaching networks and ancient migrations that contributed to Jewish genetic diversity. Its presence in Jewish DNA studies reminds us that Jewish ancestry, like Jewish history, is marked by complexity and connection across continents.

Examples & Claims in circulation:

- **American Indians:** some studies suggest Jewish markers, possibly via early colonial contact/conversos.
- **Croatian Jews in North Carolina:** historical records and DNA indicate early settlement and blending.
- **Canada/Appalachia:** Sephardic and Ashkenazi lines among Huguenot/Acadian and Appalachian descendants.
- **Virginia's First Families:** reported Jewish markers among colonial elites.

This story is echoed in the variety of Jewish DNA found across the world. For instance, Ashkenazi Jews are most commonly Y-DNA haplogroups J, E1b1b, R1a, R1b, and T, with mtDNA lineages K and H prominent as well. Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews share many of the same markers, plus others unique to their regions. Even among **presidential and royal families**, these same haplogroups appear, revealing how Jewish and non-Jewish histories are inextricably linked.

While not one of the major founder lineages, mitochondrial haplogroup X is present at low frequencies in Ashkenazi, Sephardic, and Mizrahi Jewish populations. Haplogroup X is also found in the Near East, the Mediterranean, and, notably, among some Native American groups. A famous example is Pocahontas, whose direct maternal descendants have been shown to carry mtDNA haplogroup X. The presence of X in both Jewish and Native American lineages highlights the deep and sometimes surprising genetic connections that link communities across continents and centuries.

Ben Israel's vision, Jews spread across the globe, yet connected by memory, tradition, and sometimes a hidden hand gesture, has become an enduring reality. The DNA of Jewish communities, found everywhere from Scottish Highlands to Appalachian valleys, is a living testament to resilience, adaptation, and the universal search for belonging.

Where in the World Is mtDNA Haplogroup X?

Global Distribution

Haplogroup X is found at low frequencies (1–2%) in most populations of

Europe, the Near East, and North Africa.

It is less common than other major haplogroups, such as H, K, or U.

Highest Frequencies

The Druze (northern Israel, Syria, Lebanon):

The highest known frequency of X1 and X2 subclades—sometimes up to 25% in localized studies.

The Druze are often cited as a “living genetic isolate” and have been a focus of X research.

Native Americans:

Haplogroup X2a is present at notable frequencies (up to 25%) among some Native American groups, especially the Ojibwa and other tribes around the Great Lakes.

X2a is distinct from Old World X lineages, but its presence suggests ancient migration from the Near East or Eurasia.

Northern and Central Europe:

Low but consistent frequencies (1–2%), including among Finns, Saami, and some British and French populations.

Near East and North Africa:

X1 subclade found at low-moderate levels among Egyptians, Bedouins, and

Other Levantine groups.

Caucasus and Central Asia:

Detected at low levels in Armenians, Georgians, and some Iranian populations.

Key Populations with X

Druze (Israel, Syria, Lebanon)

Native Americans (Ojibwa, Sioux, Nuu-chah-nulth, others)

Ashkenazi, Sephardic, and Mizrahi Jews (very low frequency)

Saami (Finland, Scandinavia)

French, Basque, some British groups

North Africans (Egyptians, Berbers)

Scientific Notes

X is divided into subclades: **X1** (mostly in North Africa and the Near East) and **X2** (wider in Europe, Near East, and the Americas).

The presence of X among Native Americans has been a subject of much study and debate regarding ancient migrations.

11) Genetic Diversity of European Royalty & Ancestral Legends

Mitochondrial & Y-DNA Patterns.

- **mtDNA (maternal):** U5, H, T2, Z1a appear among many royal women and consorts—ancient lineages common in Western/Northern Eurasia.

- **Y-DNA (paternal):** R1b and I1 dominate across Western/Northern Europe, found among nobility and general populations.

Rethinking “Jewish DNA” & Identity.

While it can be tempting to look for a “Jewish DNA signature” among historical figures, both genetics and genealogy remind us that identity is rarely as simple as that. King David’s own lineage, for example, includes Ruth the Moabite as his great-grandmother, an outsider by biblical standards. Likewise, DNA studies of ancient

remains in Egypt and across Europe show patterns of migration and mixing that challenge any neat division between Jewish and non-Jewish populations.

Modern genetic research demonstrates that both Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews carry a wide range of Y-DNA and mtDNA haplogroups, including R1b, R1a, T, H, U, K, and others, many of which are also common among non-Jewish Europeans. The Cohen Modal Haplotype (typically J1 or J2) and the Levite R1a lineages illustrate this diversity. For example, among Ashkenazi Jews, R1a is frequently seen among those with Levite ancestry, and R1b (including R-m269) is also found.

This overlap is not limited to Jewish populations. Many royal and noble families of Europe, including Scotland's Robert the Bruce, the Habsburgs, and the Stuarts, also carry haplogroups such as R-m269, T, H, and U, which are widespread in both Jewish and non-Jewish populations. Some studies, including recent DNA projects and surname studies, have found close matches between Scottish, Irish, and Iberian Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews, suggesting shared deep ancestry and migration routes.

Recent research even suggests that many of the early settlers of North America, including prominent figures such as Alexander Hamilton (has the hand gesture in artwork), Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln, may have had Jewish ancestry, often through Sephardic lines that originated in France, the Low Countries, or the British Isles before migrating to the New World. The same is true for Huguenot and Acadian colonists in French Canada, many of whom have been shown to have Sephardic Jewish roots.

All of this points to a simple but profound truth: identity, especially Jewish identity, has always been more about memory, ritual, and community than about a single genetic marker. The Jewish tradition of matrilineal descent, layered on top of centuries of conversion, migration, and adaptation, means that many people who today have “royal” or “Jewish” ancestry may not fit a simple genetic category. The

hidden hand motif, with its roots in Jewish ritual and symbolism, thus serves as a visual reminder that identity is complex, layered, and often hidden in plain sight.

Figure C26. Alexander Hamilton, Y-DNA, and America's Hidden Diversity

The Hamilton Surname DNA Project has used Y-DNA testing to trace the paternal lineage of Alexander Hamilton, the first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury. Four living male descendants of Hamilton's grandson, John C.A. Hamilton, were tested and matched at 37 of 37 markers, demonstrating a strong genetic continuity. The results place Alexander Hamilton in Y-DNA haplogroup I-M253, a

Figure C26. Portrait of Alexander Hamilton, Observation: A (Shin-like) pose.



lineage with high concentrations in Scandinavia and the Balkan region (Croatia, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria). This haplogroup is also common in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and among settlers in the Central Appalachia region.

Interestingly, the project found many Hamilton matches with the surname Robertson, suggesting a close historical or genetic overlap in Scotland. Even more intriguing, a high-resolution DNA match was found with Friedrich Rothfuss, a German-born individual listed in the Jewish Heritage Project (FamilyTreeDNA.com) and almost certainly of Ashkenazi (not Sephardic) Jewish origin. This connection implies that the **Hamilton line may also have Ashkenazi roots**. Some researchers speculate that the Hamilton surname could originate from the village of Hamel in northern France, an area under Norman rule for centuries and known for its medieval Jewish community. It is also documented that William the Conqueror brought Ashkenazic Jews from northern France to England after 1066 (Golb 1998).

Given the strong evidence of Jewish ancestry among many early settlers of Central Appalachia, Scotland, and Northern Ireland (Hirschman, Vance, and Harris, 2019), these findings suggest that the Hamiltons, and by extension, other prominent American families, may have a more complex and diverse heritage than traditionally assumed.

As DNA research advances, it's becoming increasingly clear that the United States was founded and shaped by an ethnically diverse, often Jewish-descended set of refugees and immigrants from Europe, Central Asia, and North Africa. This reality complicates the traditional narrative of a purely Anglo-Saxon Protestant origin and highlights the importance of recognizing the rich, intertwined roots of American identity.

12) Ritual Semiotics Summary (Visual Breastplate™)

- **Tefillin & Shin:**

The ritual binding of tefillin on the arm and head involves wrapping the straps and fingers to evoke the Hebrew letter Shin (ש) and the name

Shaddai, symbolizing covenantal protection and spiritual alignment (Deut. 6:8; 28:10).

- **Gesture Differentiation:**

The hidden hand and Priestly Blessing gestures are visually related but distinct: the hidden hand references tefillin and covenantal identity, while the Priestly Blessing signifies Kohanic ritual. Both may appear together in art, yet encode different meanings.

- **Visual Breastplate™:**

Across centuries, recurrent hand gestures in Western portraiture have functioned as discreet markers of identity, legitimacy, and spirituality a quiet “visual breastplate” signaling lineage and covenant.

13) Ethics, Legal & Data Availability

- **Historical Figures:**

All references to historical individuals are presented probabilistically, based on available evidence and scholarly standards.

- **Images and Permissions:**

Images are fully cited with source and license information; usage adheres to fair use or explicit permissions as required.

- **Data Access:**

Non-image metadata and coded entries are available to qualified researchers upon request, in accordance with data protection and scholarly transparency guidelines.

14) Funding & Conflicts of Interest

- Funding: None received.
- Conflicts: None declared.

15) Author Contributions

- Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, writing (original & review), editing: Tina Krajacic & Alexandria Krajacic.

16) Conclusion

The hidden hand motif invites a new reading of portraiture: beyond likeness and fashion, a private language runs through public art. Traced from antiquity through Renaissance courts into modernity, these gestures function as a Visual Breastplate™—protecting, signaling, and sustaining cultural memory. By integrating iconographic patterns, ritual semiotics, genealogical legends, and diaspora genetics, we reveal how a small movement of the hand can convey large meanings—lineage, covenant, and continuity—often hidden in plain sight.

A comprehensive book, *The Hidden Hand of the Breastplate™*, is currently in preparation. This volume is the first part of a trilogy that tells the story of these people and their history, from ancient origins to the present day. The upcoming volumes will continue this journey, tracing the hidden hand and its meaning through art, genetics, and the lived experience of communities across continents and centuries.

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Appendix B. Kings, Queens, Mistresses, and Children

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B2. Thathistorystudent. (2023). Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I [Digital photograph]. Own work. Copyrighted.

B3. Possibly Nicholas Hilliard. (c. 1575–1580). Queen Elizabeth I [Oil on panel]. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, GG_3347. Public domain.

B4. John Michael Wright (or studio). (1660–1665). King Charles II in Garter Robes [Oil on canvas]. National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 531. Public domain.

B5. Peter Lely. (c. 1670). Lucy Walter (as a Shepherdess) [Oil on canvas]. Abbotsford House, T.AT.3072. Public domain.

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B7. After Peter Lely. (before 1680). Mary Davis (Moll Davis) [Oil on canvas]. National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 253. Public domain.

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B11. Studio of Godfrey Kneller. (1714–1725). King George I [Oil on canvas]. National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 544. Public domain.

B12. Anonymous. (1715, 1745–1746). Jacobite Broadside – Electress Sophia and her Daughter [Prints and broadsides]. National Library of Scotland, 75241937. Public domain.

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B25. Attributed to John de Critz. (c. 1605). King James I of England [Oil on canvas]. Museo del Prado, P001954. Public domain.

B26. Attributed to Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger. (1614). Anne of Denmark [Oil on panel]. Royal Collection, RCIN 404437. Public domain.

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B38a. Attributed to Rodrigo de Villandrando. (c. 1620). Doña Juana de Salinas / Portrait of a Spanish Noblewoman [Oil on canvas]. National Gallery of Ireland. Public domain.

B38b. Attributed to Rodrigo de Villandrando. (c. 1620). Doña Juana de Salinas (Hand Close-Up) [Oil on canvas]. National Gallery of Ireland. Public domain.

B39. Bronzino. (c. 1543). Eleonora of Toledo [Oil on panel]. National Gallery Prague, O 11971. Public domain.

B40. Bronzino. (c. 1545). Cosimo I de' Medici in Armour [Oil on poplar panel]. Art Gallery of New South Wales, 78.1996. Public domain.

Appendix C. Public Exemplars & Cultural Transmission

C1. Leonardo da Vinci.

The Last Supper, 1495–1498. Tempera on gesso, pitch, and mastic. Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan, Republic of Florence. Public domain.

C2. Michelangelo Buonarroti.

Pietà, 1498–1499. Marble. St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City. Public domain.

C3. Unknown Artist.

Venus de' Medici, 1st century BCE. Marble sculpture. Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Public domain.

C4. Sebastiano del Piombo.

Portrait of a Man Said to be Christopher Columbus, 1519. Oil on canvas.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Public domain.

C5. After Simon de Passe.

Pocahontas, after 1616. Oil on canvas. National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.

(NPG.65.61). Public domain.

C6. Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger.

Queen Elizabeth I, c. 1592–1603. Oil on panel. Government Art Collection (inv. no. 3787). Public domain.

C7. William Jewett.

Elias Boudinot IV, c. 1836. Oil on canvas. Princeton University Art Museum (inv. no. y1966-19). Public domain.

C8. Leonardo da Vinci.

Mona Lisa (Lisa Gherardini), c. 1503–1519. Oil on poplar panel. Musée du Louvre, Paris (INV 779; MR 316). Public domain.

C9. Godfrey Kneller.

Portrait of Isaac Newton, 1689. Oil on canvas. Science Museum Group, London (Object ID: co65496). Public domain.

C10. Robert Hunter.

John Wesley, 31 July 1765. Oil on canvas. National Portrait Gallery, London (currently at John Wesley's House, City Road). Public domain.

C11. Baldassare Croce.

Giles of Viterbo, 1588. Fresco. Palazzo dei Priori (Sala Regia), Viterbo. Public domain.

C12. Robert Fludd (engraved by T. de Bry).

Portrait of Robert Fludd, 1645. Line engraving. National Portrait Gallery/Wellcome Collection. Public domain.

C13. Anonymous.

Christopher Smart, c. 1745. Oil on canvas. National Portrait Gallery, London (Artwork ID: mw05826). Public domain.

C14. Ladislav Šaloun.

Statue of Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel (Maharal of Prague), date unknown. Outdoor sculpture, replica. Public domain.

C15. Raphael.

The Transfiguration, 1516–1520. Oil on panel. Pinacoteca Vaticana, Vatican Museums (MV.40333). Public domain.

C16. El Greco.

Christ Carrying the Cross, c. 1580. Oil on canvas. Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection (1975.1.145). Public domain.

C17. Godfrey Kneller.

Portrait of Charles Lennox, 1st Duke of Richmond and Lennox, c. 1700. Oil on canvas. National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG 3221). Public domain.

C18. El Greco.

El caballero de la mano en el pecho (The Nobleman with his Hand on his Chest), c. 1580. Oil on canvas. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid (P00809). Public domain.

C19. Peter Paul Rubens.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, c. 1620–1622. Oil on canvas. Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, CA (Accession No. M.1975.03.P). Public domain.

C20. Attributed to Agnolo Bronzino.

A Young Woman and Her Little Boy (Portrait of Doña Grasia Nasi Mendes), c. 16th century. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Public domain.

C21. John Trumbull.

Declaration of Independence, 1819. Oil on canvas. United States Capitol Rotunda, Washington, D.C. (NPG D1357). Public domain.

C22. Anonymous, attributed to Ludwig Doell.

Augustus, Duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenberg, c. 1822. Oil on canvas. Royal Collection, London (RCIN 406366). Public domain.

C23a. Stephen Geary.

Statue of Richard Hooker, 1858. Bronze. Exeter Cathedral Close, Exeter, Devon, England. Public domain.

C23b. Unknown Artist.

Unknown Man, formerly known as Richard Hooker, late 16th–early 17th century. Oil on panel. National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG 193). Public domain.

C24. Xanthippe26.

Statue of Liberty, 2023. Digital photograph. Liberty Island, New York City, NY. Wikimedia Commons. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=154681513>

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C25. Jean Benner.

Auguste Bartholdi in 1886, 1886. Painting. Musée Bartholdi. Public domain.

C26. After John Trumbull.

Alexander Hamilton, c. late 18th–early 19th century. Oil on canvas. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Washington, D.C.

<https://www.treasury.gov/about/history/Pages/ahamilton.aspx>

Opens a new window

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=518478>

Opens a new window

Public domain.

Appendix D. Priestly Blessing, Shin, and Related Hand Gestures

D1. Unknown artist. Priestly Blessing, in the Synagogue of Enschede [Photograph]. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain.

D2. Michelangelo Buonarroti. (1512). The Creation of Adam (detail) [Fresco]. Sistine Chapel, Vatican City. Public domain.

D3. Yonkeltron. (2007). Tefillin (shel yad), close view [Photograph]. Wikimedia Commons. CC BY 3.0.

D4. John Singleton Copley. (1776–1777). The Copley Family (detail) [Oil on canvas]. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1961.7.1. Public domain.

D5. Tassiano Daniele. (2015). Young Christopher Columbus, The Monteverde Statue (Genoa) “The Boy Columbus” [Photograph]. Wikimedia Commons. CC BY-SA 4.0.

D6. Anthony van Dyck. (c. 1626). A Genoese Noblewoman and Her Son [Oil on canvas]. National Gallery of Art, 1942.9.91. Public domain.

Appendix B. Kings, Queens, Mistresses, and Children with the Hidden Hand Motif

Below are selected portraits of European royalty, their consorts, mistresses, and children, each displaying the clear Shin or “hidden hand” gesture. These examples demonstrate how the motif was woven into the visual language of power, lineage, and identity across dynasties and generations.



Figure B1. Elizabeth I of England, the Armada Portrait (Queen's House Version)

Anonymous. Elizabeth I (1533–1603) (the "Armada Portrait"), c. 1588. Oil on oak panel, 112.5 × 127 cm. Royal Museums Greenwich, Accession No. ZBA7719.

Image Information:

Description: Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I, hidden hand gesture.

Date: c. 1588

Source: Royal Museums Greenwich

- Author: Anonymous
- License: Public domain



Figure B2. Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I

Thathistorystudent. Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, 2023. Digital photograph, own work.

Image Information:

- Description: Digital photograph of Queen Elizabeth I, hidden hand gesture.
- Date: 2023
- Source: Thathistorystudent
- Author: Thathistorystudent
- License: Copyrighted, own work



Figure B3. Queen Elizabeth I

Possibly Nicholas Hilliard (1547–1619). *Queen Elizabeth I*, c. 1575–1580. Oil on panel,

63.5 × 48.5 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Accession No. GG_3347.

Schloss Ambras portrait of Elizabeth I of England.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Elizabeth I featuring hidden hand gesture
- Date: c. 1575–1580
- Source: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
- Author: Possibly Nicholas Hilliard
- License: Public domain



Figure B4. King Charles II in Garter Robes

John Michael Wright (1617–1694), or studio. *Portrait of Charles II in Garter Robes*, between 1660–1665. Oil on canvas, 126.4 × 101 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London, Accession No. NPG 531.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Charles II in Garter Robes showing hidden hand gesture.
- Date: 1660–1665
- Source: National Portrait Gallery, London

- Author: John Michael Wright or studio
- License: Public domain

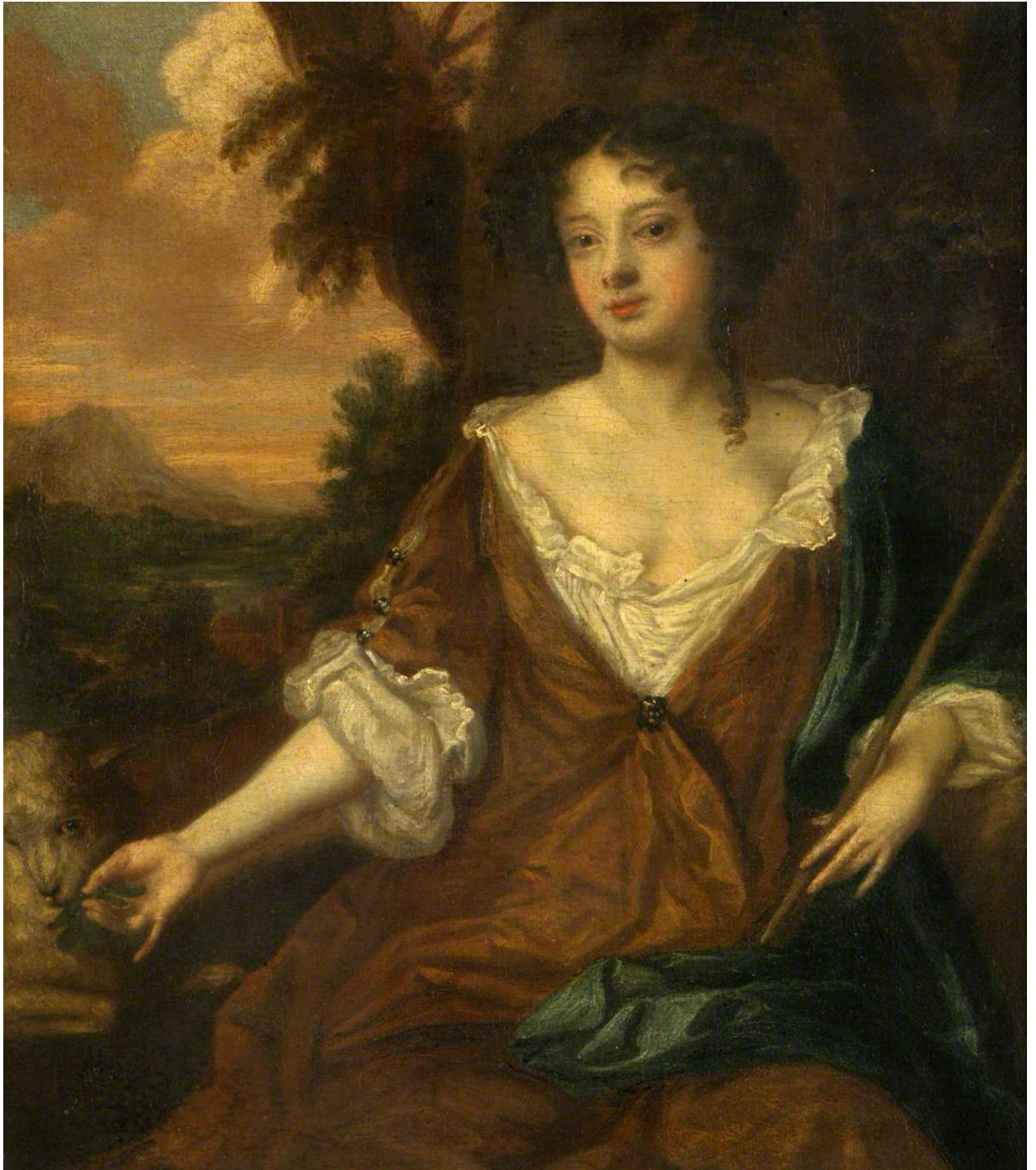


Figure B5. Lucy Walter (1630–1658), as a Shepherdess

Peter Lely (1618–1680). *Lucy Walter (1630–1658), as a Shepherdess* (possibly Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth), c. 1670. Oil on canvas, 39.2 × 34 cm.

Abbotsford House, Accession No. T.AT.3072.

Image Information:

- Description: Lucy Walter depicted as a Shepherdess, a hidden hand gesture is visible.
- Date: c. 1670
- Source: Abbotsford House
- Author: Peter Lely
- License: Public domain



Figure B6. Mary Bagot, Countess of Falmouth and Dorset (1645–1679)
Peter Lely (1618–1680). Mary Bagot, Countess of Falmouth and Dorset (1645–1679),

c. 1664–1665. Oil on canvas, 124.3 × 101.3 cm. Royal Collection, Accession No. RCIN 404958. Mary Bagot was a mistress of Charles II.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Mary Bagot, hidden hand gesture present.
- Date: c. 1664–1665
- Source: Royal Collection
- Author: Peter Lely
- License: Public domain



Figure B7. Mary Davis (Moll Davis)

After Peter Lely (1618–1680). *Mary Davis*, before 1680. Oil on canvas, 125.7 × 101.6 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London, Accession No. NPG 253. Mary Davis, also known as Moll Davis, was an actress and mistress of Charles II.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Mary Davis (Moll Davis) with hidden hand gesture.
- Date: before 1680
- Source: National Portrait Gallery, London
- Author: After Peter Lely
- License: Public domain



Figure B8. Hortense Mancini (1646–1699), Duchess of Mazarin

Godfrey Kneller (1646–1723). *Hortense Mancini (1646–1699), Duchess of Mazarin*,

[date unknown]. Oil on canvas. Museums Sheffield.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Hortense Mancini featuring hidden hand gesture.
- Date: Unknown
- Source: Museums Sheffield
- Author: Godfrey Kneller
- License: Public domain



Figure B9. James II of England (1633–1701) with Garter Collar

School of Peter Lely (after Peter Lely, 1618–1680). *Portrait of James II of England*

(1633–1701) with Garter Collar, c. 1650–1675. Oil on canvas.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of James II displaying hidden hand gesture.
- Date: c. 1650–1675
- Source: School of Peter Lely
- Author: After Peter Lely
- License: Public domain



Figure B10. The Right Honorable Lady Elizabeth Butler, Countess of Chesterfield, A (Shin-like)

Alexander Browne, after Peter Lely (1618–1680). *The Right Honorable Lady Elizabeth Butler, Countess of Chesterfield*, c. 1680. Mezzotint on laid paper [proof], plate:

33.8 × 24.5 cm; sheet: 44.6 × 25.4 cm. National Gallery of Art, Accession No. 2001.118.5. Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Paul Mellon Fund.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Lady Elizabeth Butler with hidden hand gesture.
- Date: c. 1680
- Source: National Gallery of Art
- Author: Alexander Browne, after Peter Lely
- License: Public domain



Figure B11. King George I, A (Shin-like)

Studio of Godfrey Kneller (1646–1723). *King George I*, copy of an original from 1714, 1714–1725. Oil on canvas, 192.4 × 137.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London, Accession No. NPG 544.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of King George I displaying hidden hand gesture.

- Date: 1714–1725
- Source: National Portrait Gallery, London
- Author: Studio of Godfrey Kneller
- License: Public domain



Figure B12. Jacobite Broadside – Electress Sophia and her Daughter.

Anonymous. *Jacobite Broadside – Electress Sophia and her Daughter*, 1715; 1745–1746. Prints and broadsides. National Library of Scotland, Accession No. 75241937.

Image Information:

- Description: Broadside depicting Electress Sophia and her daughter with hidden hand gesture.
- Date: 1715; 1745–1746
- Source: National Library of Scotland
- Author: Anonymous
- License: Public domain



Figure B13. Henrietta Howard (1689–1767), 9th Countess of Suffolk,

Observation: No Central Pairing, C (Neutral Decorum)

Charles Jervas (1675–1739). *Henrietta Howard (1689–1767), 9th Countess of Suffolk*, 1724. Oil on canvas, 97.2 × 117 cm. Marble Hill House, Accession No. 88029498.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Henrietta Howard with hidden hand gesture.
- Date: 1724
- Source: Marble Hill House
- Author: Charles Jervas
- License: Public domain



Figure B14. Henry IV, King of France and Navarre, A (Shin-like)

Jacques Boulbène (1560–1605). *Henry IV, King of France and Navarre*, circa 1600.

Oil on canvas, 189 × 123 cm. Musée des Augustins, Toulouse — RO 739.

Image Information:

- Description: Henry IV, King of France and Navarre with hidden hand gesture.
- Date: circa 1600
- Source: Musée des Augustins, Toulouse (Musée des Augustins artwork)
- Author: Jacques Boulbène
- License: Public domain (artist died in 1605; image is a faithful photographic reproduction of a public domain work)
- Object History: Commissioned in 1599; adorned the main hall of the Capitole de Toulouse



Figure B15. Queen Henrietta Maria of England, A (Shin-like)

Workshop of Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641). *Queen Henrietta Maria of England*, c. 1638–1641. Oil on canvas. Statens Museum for Kunst, Accession No. KMSsp240.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria featuring hidden hand.
- Date: c. 1638–1641
- Source: Statens Museum for Kunst
- Author: Workshop of Anthony van Dyck
- License: Public domain



Figure B16. King Edward VII (1841–1910), A (Shin-like)

Luke Fildes (1843–1927). *Edward VII*, 1901–1902. Oil on canvas. Commissioned by Edward VII. Royal Collection, UK — ID 404553.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Edward VII with visible hand positioning.
- Date: 1901–1902; restored 14 May 2024
- Source: Royal Collection, UK (ID 404553)
- Author: Luke Fildes
- License: Public domain



Figure B17. Catherine Parr, A (Shin-like)

Anonymous (possibly William Scrots). *Catherine Parr*, c. 1545. Oil on panel, 63.5 × 50.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London, Accession No. NPG 4618.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Catherine Parr showing hidden hand.
- Date: c. 1545
- Source: National Portrait Gallery, London

- Author: Anonymous (possibly William Scrots)
- License: Public domain



Figure B18. Marie de Médicis, Reine de France, A (Shin-like)

Frans Pourbus the Younger (1569–1622). *Portrait of Marie de' Medici*, c. 1600–1625 (likely c. 1610). Oil on canvas, 307 × 186 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris — INV 1710.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Marie de' Medici in royal costume; hidden hand present.
- Date: c. 1600–1625 (likely c. 1610)
- Object History: Commissioned by Marie de' Medici for the Petite Galerie du Louvre (c. 1609–1610); transferred through French crown collections; ceded during the French Revolution; entered the Louvre in 1816
- Source: Musée du Louvre, Paris (collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010064946)
- Author: Frans Pourbus the Younger
- License: Public domain (artist died in 1622; image is a faithful photographic reproduction of a public domain work)



Figure B19. Catherine of Aragon, A (Shin-like)

Lucas Horenbout (1490–1544). *Catherine of Aragon (1485–1536), Queen Consort of England*, 1525. Miniature.

Image Information:

- Description: Miniature of Catherine of Aragon highlighting hands
- Date: 1525
- Source: radikal.ru; *Portraits of Kings*
- Author: Lucas Horenbout
- License: Public domain



Figure B20. Anna Pavlovna, Queen of the Netherlands

Unknown artist. Anna Pavlovna, Queen of the Netherlands (née Grand Duchess of

Russia), 1814.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Anna Pavlovna, hidden hand gesture.
- Date: 1814
- Source: Art Museum of Moscow
- Author: Unknown artist
- License: Public domain



Figure B21. Archduke Maximilian, A (Shin-like)

William Scrots. *Archduke Maximilian*, circa 1544. Oil on panel. [Collection details if

known], [Location if known].

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Emperor Maximilian II (1527–1576) with hidden hand motif
- Date: circa 1544
- Source: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna ([link])
- Author: William Scrots (active 1537–1553)
- License: Public domain.



Figure B22. Portrait of Emperor Peter II Alexeyevich, A (Shin-like)

Unknown artist. *Portrait of Emperor Peter II*, 1720s. Oil on canvas, 88 × 69 cm. State Historical Museum, accession И I 4096.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Emperor Peter II displaying hand gesture.
- Date: 1720s
- Source: State Historical Museum
- Author: Unknown artist
- License: Public domain



Figure B23. Ivan the Terrible and His Son Ivan on November 16, 1581, A (Shin-like)

Ilya Repin (1844–1930). *Ivan the Terrible and His Son Ivan on November 16th, 1581*, 1885. Oil on canvas, 199.5 × 254 cm. Tretyakov Gallery, accession 743.

Image Information:

- Description: Depiction of Ivan the Terrible with his son, hand gesture present on son.
- Date: 1885
- Source: Tretyakov Gallery
- Author: Ilya Repin
- License: Public domain



Figure B24. Portrait of Fiodor Alexeyevich Romanov, A (Shin-like)

Anonymous. *Portrait of Fiodor Alexeyevich Romanov*, unknown date. Oil, 83 × 70 cm. Hermitage Museum, accession ЭРЖ-1807.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Fiodor Alexeyevich Romanov, hand gesture visible.
- Date: Unknown
- Source: Hermitage Museum
- Author: Anonymous
- License: Public domain



Figure B25. King James I of England, A (Shin-like)

Attributed to John de Critz (1551–1642). *King James I of England*, c. 1605. Oil on canvas, 196 × 120 cm. Museo del Prado — Accession No. P001954.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of King James I featuring hand positioning

- Date: c. 1605
- Source: Museo del Prado
- Author: Attributed to John de Critz
- License: Public domain



Figure B26. Anne of Denmark (1574–1619), A (Shin-like)

Attributed to Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (1561–1636). *Anne of Denmark*, 1614.

Oil on panel, 110.5 × 87.3 cm. Royal Collection — Accession No. RCIN 404437.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Anne of Denmark with hidden hand gesture.
- Date: 1614
- Source: Royal Collection
- Author: Attributed to Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger
- License: Public domain



Figure B27. Princess Mary of England and Scotland (1605–1607), A (Shin-like)

Willem van de Passe (–1637). *Princess Mary of England and Scotland*, 1605–1607. Oil on panel.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Princess Mary with visible hand gesture.
- Date: 1605–1607
- Source: Unknown
- Author: Willem van de Passe
- License: Public domain



Figure B28. King Charles I of England (1600–1649), A (Shin-like)

Anonymous. *King Charles I*, late 17th / early 18th century. Oil on canvas, 83.8 × 73.7 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG 4836).

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of King Charles I featuring hidden hand.
- Date: Late 17th / early 18th century
- Source: National Portrait Gallery, London
- Author: Anonymous
- License: Public domain



Figure B29. King Charles I of England (1600–1649), Three-Quarter Portrait, A (Shin-like)

Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641). *King Charles I of England*, c. 1632. Oil on canvas, 103 × 81 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (GG_483).

Image Information:

- Description: Three-quarter portrait of King Charles I with hand gesture.
- Date: c. 1632
- Source: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
- Author: Anthony van Dyck
- License: Public domain



Figure B30. Charles of Bourbon, King of Spain, Naples, and Sicily (1716–1788), A (Shin-like)

Giuseppe Bonito (1707–1789). *Charles of Bourbon*, 18th century. Oil on canvas, 102 × 76 cm. Sotheby's collection (unframed/unlined).

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Charles of Bourbon featuring hand gesture.

- Date: 18th century
- Source: Sotheby's collection
- Author: Giuseppe Bonito
- License: Public domain



Figure B31. Prince James as a Young Man (Jacobite Broadside), A (Shin-like)

Anonymous. Coloured portrait of Prince James as young man, in armour, with hand

on helmet and sword at side, blue sash over breastplate, 1715; 1745–1746. Prints and broadsides. National Library of Scotland, Accession number 75241112.

Image Information:

- Description: Jacobite broadside of Prince James with hand gesture.
 - Date: 1715; 1745–1746
- Source: National Library of Scotland
- Author: Anonymous
- License: Public domain



Figure B32. Marie Antoinette and Her Children (1787), A (Shin-like)

Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun (1755–1842). *Marie Antoinette and her children, including Louis XVII, Louis Joseph (Dauphin of France), and Marie Thérèse of France*, 1787. Oil on canvas, 275 × 215 cm. Palace of Versailles, Antichambre du Grand Couvert. Accession numbers AC 1945 / INV 3059 / MV 4520.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Marie Antoinette and children with hidden hand gestures.
- Date: 1787
- Source: Palace of Versailles
- Author: Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun
- License: Public domain



Figure B33. Prince James Francis Edward Stuart (1688–1690), A (Shin-like)

John Smith (1652–1743). *Prince James Francis Edward Stuart*. Mezzotint, 35.8 × 25.6 cm (sheet of paper). Royal Collection, RCIN 603479.

Image Information:

- Description: Mezzotint of Prince James Francis Edward Stuart showing hand gesture.
- Date: c. 1688–1690
- Source: Royal Collection
- Author: John Smith
- License: Public domain



Figure B34. Joanna of Austria (1535–1573), A (Shin-like)

Follower of Antonis Mor (–1575). *Joanna of Austria*, circa 1552–1553. Oil on canvas, 95.6 × 69.1 cm (37.6 × 27.2 in). Royal Collection, RCIN 407223.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Joanna of Austria, hidden hand motif present.
- Date: circa 1552–1553
- Source: Royal Collection, RCIN 407223
- Author: Follower of Antonis Mor
- Object History: Bought by Queen Victoria from the Collection of King Louis Philippe, 6 May 1853
- License: Public domain



Figure B35. Mary Queen of Scots (1542–1587), A (Shin-like)

Unknown author. *Mary Queen of Scots*, 17th century. Oil on canvas, 157 × 126 cm.

Blairs Museum, Blairs College, Drawing Room, accession number T9106BLRBM.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Mary Queen of Scots with visible hand positioning.
- Date: 17th century
- Source: Blairs Museum, Blairs College
- Author: Unknown
- License: Public domain



Figure B36. King Francis I and Diane de Poitiers, A (Shin-like)

Unknown artist. *King Francis I and Diane de Poitiers in the sculptor's studio*, first half

of the 19th century. Oil on canvas, 36 × 27 cm. Private collection, Switzerland; sold anonymously at Koller Auctions, Zurich, 20 March 2013, lot no. 6451.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of King Francis I and Diane de Poitiers, hand gesture present.
- Date: First half of 19th century
- Source: Private collection, Switzerland
- Author: Unknown artist
- License: Public domain



Figure B37. Alexander III and Empress Maria Fyodorovna on Holiday in Copenhagen in 1893 (Alexander's Left-Hand, A (Shin-like))

Unknown photographer. *Emperor Alexander III of Russia with Empress **Maria Fyodorovna on holiday in Copenhagen***, 1893. Photograph. Original file: 1,472 × 2,000 pixels (JPEG). Wikimedia Commons.

Image Information:

- Description: Photograph of Emperor Alexander III and Empress Maria Fyodorovna during their 1893 visit to Copenhagen. Alexander III with hand gesture.
- Date: 1893
- Source: Wikimedia Commons — [“Maria Fyodorovna and Alexander III of Russia in Denmark 1893”](#)
- Author: Unknown
- License: Public domain (published in the Russian Empire before 1917; copyright expired under {{PD-Russia-expired}} and U.S. public domain pre-1930 criteria)

Figure B38a. Maria de Salinas (Lady Mary Willoughby, c. 1490-1539) Doña Juana de Salinas/ Portrait of a Spanish Noblewoman

Attributed to Rodrigo de Villandrando. *Doña Juana de Salinas*, circa 1620. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Ireland.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Doña Juana de Salinas, a notable Spanish noblewoman with hand gesture, and close friend of Catherine of Aragon.
- Date: circa 1620
- Source: National Gallery of Ireland
- Author: Attributed to Rodrigo de Villandrando (active early 17th century)
- License: Public domain



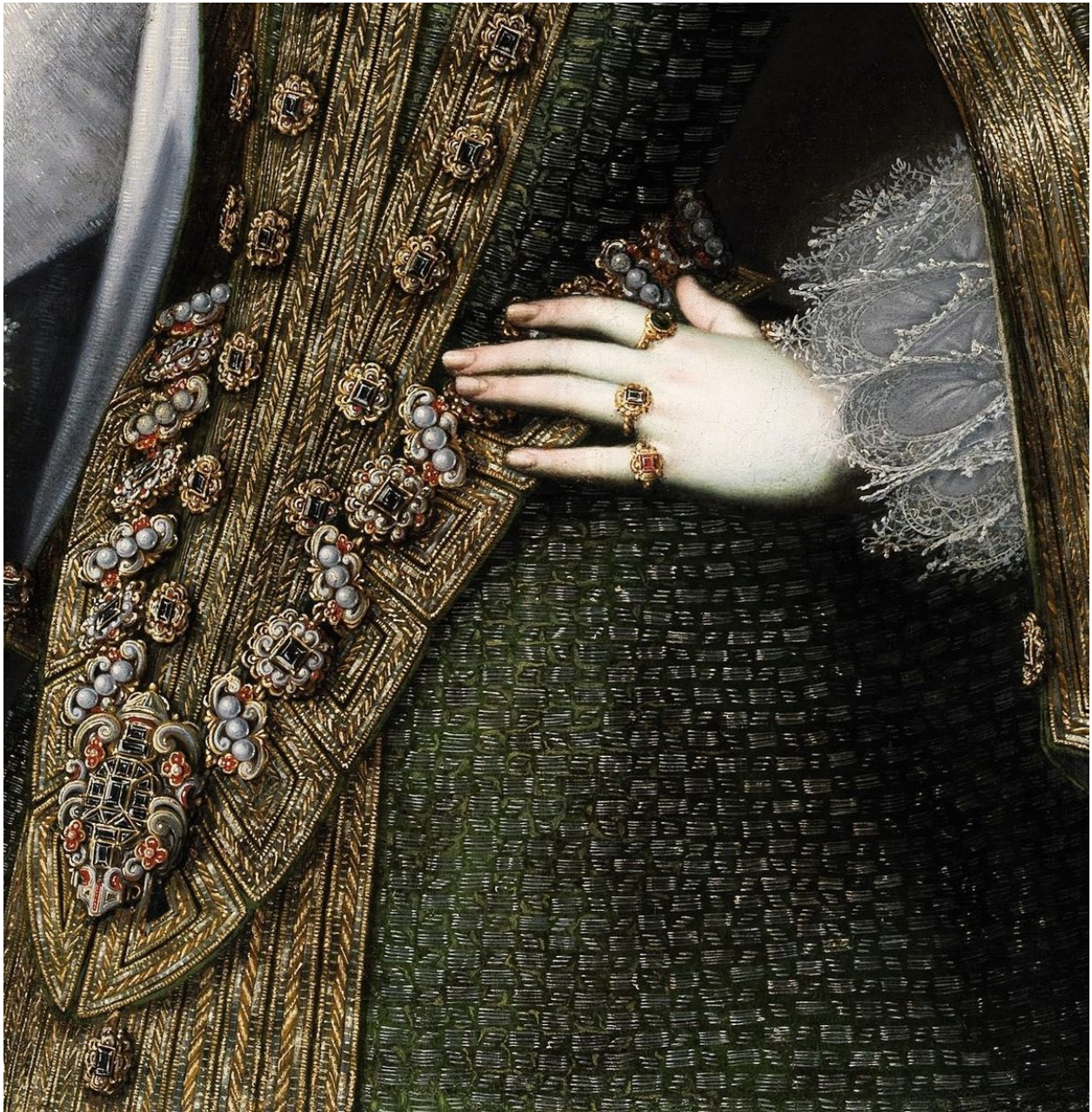


Figure B38b. Doña Juana de Salinas (Hand Close-Up), A (Shin-like)

Attributed to Rodrigo de Villandrando. *Doña Juana de Salinas*, circa 1620. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Ireland.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Doña Juana de Salinas, a notable Spanish noblewoman and close friend of Catherine of Aragon, with close up of hand gesture.

- Date: circa 1620
- Source: National Gallery of Ireland
- Author: Attributed to Rodrigo de Villandrando (active early 17th century)
- License: Public domain



Figure B39. Eleonora of Toledo, A (Shin-like)

Bronzino (1503–1572). *Eleonora of Toledo*, c. 1543. Oil on panel, 59 × 46 cm (23.2 × 18.1 in). National Gallery Prague — Accession No. O 11971.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Eleonora of Toledo featuring subtle Shin-like hand gesture.
- Date: circa 1543
- Source: National Gallery Prague — <https://www.ngprague.cz/en/event/407/old-masters>
- Author: Bronzino
- License: Public domain (faithful photographic reproduction of a two-dimensional artwork; public domain in the U.S. and countries with copyright term ≤100 years after author's death)



Figure B40. Cosimo I de' Medici in Armour, A (Shin-like)

Bronzino (1503–1572). *Cosimo I de' Medici in Armour*, c. 1545. Oil on poplar panel, 117.5 × 98.5 cm (46.2 × 38.7 in). Art Gallery of New South Wales — Accession No. 78.1996.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Cosimo I de' Medici in armour with a subtle Shin-like hand configuration.
- Date: circa 1545
- Source: Google Arts & Culture — <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/BgE-KxM-dl89lg>
- Author: Bronzino
- License: Public domain (faithful photographic reproduction of a two-dimensional artwork; public domain in the U.S. and countries with copyright term ≤ 100 years after author's death)

Appendix C. Public Exemplars of the Hidden Hand Motif

Below are selected examples of public figures and artists across history, each displaying the Shin or “hidden hand” gesture. These case studies demonstrate the recurrence and diversity of the motif from classical antiquity through the Renaissance and into the modern era, highlighting its continued symbolic significance across cultures and time periods.

Note: For a detailed, stand-alone analysis of the Mona Lisa and the encoded gesture in Leonardo’s most famous portrait, see Krajacic, T., & Krajacic, A. (2025). *The Hidden Hand of the Breastplate™: Mona Lisa, Gesture, and Diasporic Identity in Renaissance Portraiture*.



Figure C1. *The Last Supper*

Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519). *The Last Supper*, 1495–1498. Tempera on gesso, pitch, and mastic, 460 × 880 cm. Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan, Republic of Florence.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Multiple apostles depicted with hand gestures echoing the **A (Shin-like)** configuration.
- Date: 1495–1498
- Source: Santa Maria delle Grazie
- Author: Leonardo da Vinci
- License: Public domain



Figure C2. Pietà

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564). *Pietà*, 1498–1499. Marble, 174 × 195 × 69 cm.
St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Christ's and Mary's hands arranged intentionally to suggest hidden hand

motif; similar gestures appear in frescoes and drawings,

A (Shin-like).

Date: 1498–1499

- Source: St. Peter's Basilica
- Author: Michelangelo Buonarroti
- License: Public domain



Figure C3. Venus de' Medici, 1st Century BCE

Unknown artist. *Venus de' Medici*, 1st century BCE. Marble sculpture. Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Hand pose with fingers grouped reminiscent of later symbolic gesture.

A (Shin-like).

Date: 1st century BCE

- Source: Uffizi Gallery, Florence
- Author: Unknown
- License: Public domain



Figure C4. Portrait of a Man Said to be Christopher Columbus (Cristobol Colon)

Sebastiano del Piombo (1485–1547). *Portrait of a Man, Said to be Christopher Columbus*, 1519. Oil on canvas, 106.7 × 88.3 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Later depictions of Columbus reinforce symbolic hand motifs; some statues and paintings show hidden hand gestures, suggesting deliberate

symbolism,

A (Shin-like)

Date: 1519

- Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
- Author: Sebastiano del Piombo
- License: Public domain



Figure C5. Pocahontas (Matoaka, Rebecca Rolfe)

After Simon de Passe (1595–1647). Pocahontas, after 1616. Oil on canvas, 77.5 × 64.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C. (NPG.65.61).

Image Information:

- Gesture: Hand pose suggestive of hidden hand symbolism.

A (Shin-like).

Historical significance: Portrait became entwined with debates about Native American origins and lost tribes of Israel

- Date: After 1616
- Source: National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.
- Author: After Simon de Passe
- License: Public domain



Figure C6. Queen Elizabeth I

Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (1561–1636). *Queen Elizabeth I*, c. 1592–1603. Oil on panel, 112.5 × 89 cm. Government Art Collection (inv. no. 3787).

Image Information:

- Gesture: Later portraits also show unnatural, **A (Shin-like)** hand pose.
- Symbolism: Stylization reinforces themes of encoded gesture in royal portraiture
- Date: c. 1592–1603
- Source: Government Art Collection
- Author: Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger
- License: Public domain



Figure C7. Elias Boudinot IV

William Jewett (1792–1874). *Elias Boudinot IV*, c. 1836. Oil on canvas, 235.5 × 153 cm. Princeton University Art Museum (inv. no. y1966-19).

Image Information:

- Gesture: **A (Shin-like)** variant of the hidden hand configuration.
- Significance: Demonstrates motif's endurance into 19th-century American portraiture
- Date: c. 1836
- Source: Princeton University Art Museum

- Author: William Jewett
- License: Public domain



Figure C8. Mona Lisa (Lisa Gherardini)

Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519). *Mona Lisa*, c. 1503–1519. Oil on poplar panel, 79.4 × 53.4 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (INV 779; MR 316).

Image Information:

- Gesture: Right hand resting over the other wrist; index and little fingers slightly apart; soft middle–ring pairing,

A (Shin-like)

Symbolism: Deliberate pose reinforces subtle Shin-like configuration

- Date: c. 1503–1519
- Source: Musée du Louvre, Paris
- Author: Leonardo da Vinci
- License: Public domain

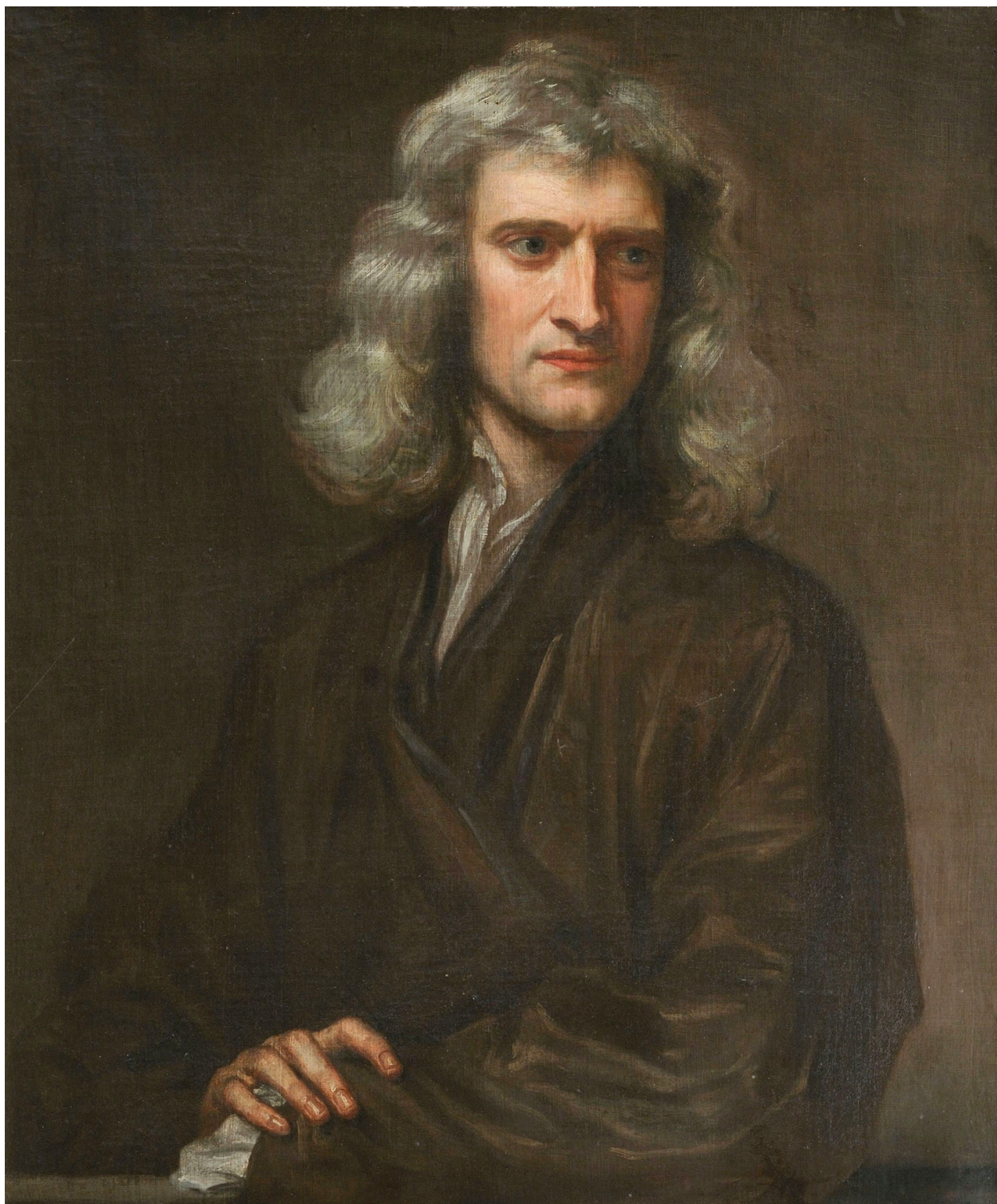


Figure C9. Sir Isaac Newton

Godfrey Kneller (1646–1723). *Portrait of Isaac Newton*, 1689 (original type; multiple

half-length copies). Oil on canvas. Science Museum Group, London — Object ID co65496 (copy after Kneller, 1689).

Image Information:

- Gesture: Right hand rests across left forearm; central digits gently held together, retaining **A (Shin-like)** quality
- Date: 1689
- Source: Science Museum Group, London
- Author: Godfrey Kneller
- License: Public domain



Figure C10. John Wesley

Robert Hunter (1715–1803). *John Wesley*, 31 July 1765. Oil on canvas. National

Portrait Gallery — currently at John Wesley's House, City Road, London.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Right hand on chest; central digits held together, demonstrating **A (Shin-like)** configuration.
- Date: 31 July 1765
- Source: National Portrait Gallery, London
- Author: Robert Hunter
- License: Public domain



Figure C11. Giles of Viterbo

Baldassare Croce (fresco). *Giles of Viterbo*, 1588, Palazzo dei Priori (Sala Regia), Viterbo. Fresco.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Right hand on open book, middle–ring finger pairing, exhibiting **A (Shin-like)** configuration.
- Date: 1588
- Source: Palazzo dei Priori (Sala Regia), Viterbo
- Author: Baldassare Croce
- License: Public domain



Figure C12. Robert Fludd

Robert Fludd. Line engraving by T. de Bry, 1645. Oil on canvas. Example records: National Portrait Gallery engraved portraits; Welcome Collection and other collections.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Right hand on breast, middle–ring finger pairing, exhibiting **A (Shin-like)** configuration.
- Date: 1645
- Source: National Portrait Gallery / Welcome Collection
- Author: Robert Fludd; engraving by T. de Bry
- License: Public domain



Figure C13. Christopher Smart

Anonymous. Christopher Smart, circa 1745. Oil on canvas. National Portrait Gallery, London — Artwork ID: mw05826.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Right hand on breast, middle–ring finger pairing, demonstrating **A (Shin-like)** configuration.
- Date: circa 1745
- Source: National Portrait Gallery, London
- Author: Anonymous
- License: Public domain



Figure C14. Statue of Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel

Ladislav Šaloun. Statue of Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel (Maharal of Prague), date unknown. Outdoor sculpture, replica.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Right hand on right side, middle–ring finger pairing, **A (Shin-like)**.
- Significance: Replica features plaque describing Maharal's death theme; includes symbolic elements such as a nude young girl and small dog

- Date: Unknown
- Source: Outdoor sculpture, replica
- Author: Ladislav Šaloun
- License: Public domain



Figure C15. The Transfiguration

Raphael (1483–1520). The Transfiguration, 1516–1520. Oil on panel, 410 × 279 cm.

Pinacoteca Vaticana, Vatican Museums — MV.40333.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Depiction of Jesus with hand configuration consistent with hidden hand **A (Shin-like)** symbolism.
- Date: 1516–1520
- Source: Pinacoteca Vaticana, Vatican Museums
- Author: Raphael
- License: Public domain



Figure C16. Christ Carrying the Cross

El Greco (1541–1614). Christ Carrying the Cross, c. 1580. Oil on canvas, 105 × 79 cm.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection — 1975.1.145.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Prominent hand gesture, suggesting motif's resonance across religious art and centuries, **A (Shin-like)**.
- Date: circa 1580
- Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection
- Author: El Greco
- License: Public domain



Figure C17. Charles Lennox

Godfrey Kneller (1646–1723). Portrait of Charles Lennox, 1st Duke of Richmond and Lennox, c. 1700. Oil on canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London — NPG 3221.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Left hand resting on abdomen, maintaining A (Shin-like) configuration.
- Date: circa 1700
- Source: National Portrait Gallery, London
- Author: Godfrey Kneller
- License: Public domain



Figure C18. The Nobleman with his Hand on his Chest

El Greco (1541–1614). *El caballero de la mano en el pecho*, c. 1580. Oil on canvas,

[dimensions if known]. Museo Nacional del Prado — P00809.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Right hand with the hidden hand gesture, **A (Shin-like)**
 - Date: circa 1580
- Source: Museo Nacional del Prado
- Author: El Greco
- License: Public domain



Figure C19. St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), Founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits)

Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640). *Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, circa 1620–1622. Oil on canvas. Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, CA. Accession No. M.1975.03.P.

Image Information:

- Gesture/Details: Right hand lifted, middle–ring finger pairing, **A (Shin-like)** configuration.
- Date: circa 1620–1622
- Source: Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, CA
- Author: Peter Paul Rubens
- License: Public domain (artist died in 1640; image is a faithful photographic reproduction of a public domain work)



Figure C20. Portrait of Doña Grasia Nasi Mendes (attributed), c. 16th century

Attributed to Agnolo Bronzino (1503–1572). *A Young Woman and Her Little Boy*, circa 16th century. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

[Accession No. if available].

Image Information:

- Gesture/Details: Woman with right hand holding a bag; little boy with left hand in A (Shin-like) gesture, middle–ring finger pairing, holding woman's hand.
- Date: circa 16th century
- Source: National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
- Author: Attributed to Agnolo Bronzino
- License: Public domain (artist died in 1572; image is a faithful photographic reproduction of a public domain work)



Figure C21. Portrait of President John Adams in the Drafting Committee of the Declaration of Independence

John Trumbull (1756–1843). Declaration of Independence, 1819. Oil on canvas.

United States Capitol Rotunda, Washington, D.C. NPG D1357.

Image Information:

- Gesture/Details: Depicts the five-man drafting committee (including John Adams) presenting their work to Congress, John Adams with the hand gesture, **A (Shin-like)**.
- Date: 1819
- Source: U.S. Capitol Rotunda, Washington, D.C.
- Author: John Trumbull
- License: Public domain (artist died in 1843; work published before 1929)
- Notes: The painting does not represent an actual ceremony; the figures were

never in the same room simultaneously. The image is also featured on the reverse of the U.S. \$2 bill.



Figure C22. Augustus, Duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenberg (1772–1822)

Anonymous, attributed to Ludwig Doell (1789–1863). *Augustus, Duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenberg*, circa 1822. Oil on canvas, 98 × 75.5 cm (38.5 × 29.7 in). Royal Collection, London. RCIN 406366.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Augustus, Duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenberg, grandfather of Albert, Prince Consort of Queen Victoria. Hidden hand gesture, **A (Shin-like)**.
- Date: circa 1822
- Source: Royal Collection, London (RCIN 406366)
- Author: Anonymous, attributed to Ludwig Doell
- License: Public domain (artist died in 1863; image is a faithful photographic reproduction of a public domain work)

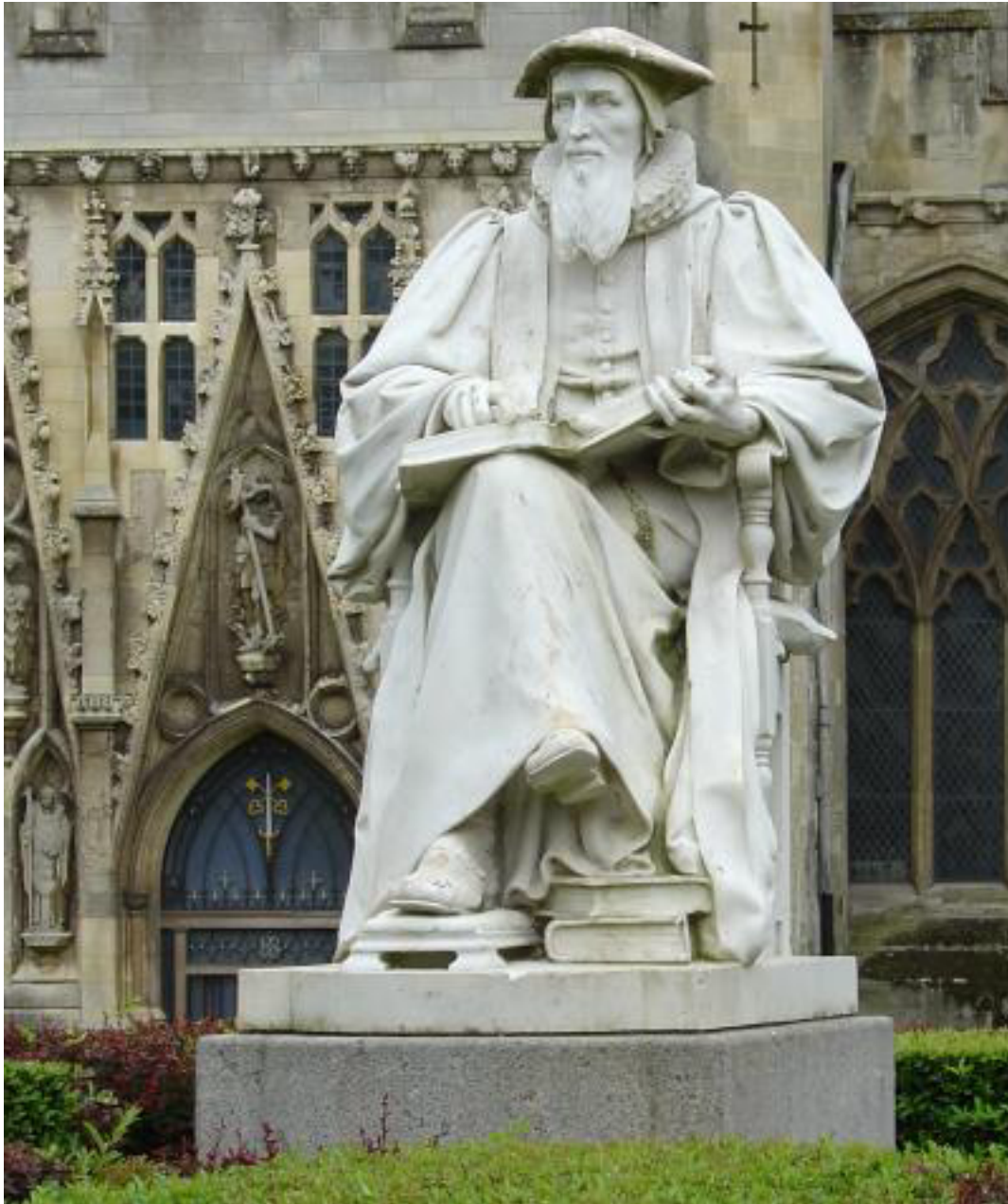


Figure C23a. Statue of Richard Hooker

Stephen Geary (1797–1854). Statue of Richard Hooker, 1858. Bronze. Exeter Cathedral Close, Exeter, Devon, England.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Left hand raised, fingers arranged in A (Shin-like) or hidden hand configuration, echoing the motif found in earlier portraiture

- Date: 1858
- Source: Exeter Cathedral Close, Exeter
- Author: Stephen Geary
- License: Public domain (artist died in 1854; statue erected posthumously; image is a faithful photographic reproduction of a public domain work) photographic reproduction of a public domainwork)



Figure C23b. Portrait of Richard Hooker (formerly attributed)

Unknown artist. Unknown Man, formerly known as Richard Hooker, late 16th – early 17th century. Oil on panel. National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG 193.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Right hand resting on chest, central digits gently paired, suggesting A (Shin-like) configuration
- Date: Late 16th – early 17th century
- Source: National Portrait Gallery, London
- Author: Unknown
- License: Public domain
- Notes: This portrait was traditionally identified as Richard Hooker, but its attribution has been revised. The gesture nonetheless fits the Shin-like motif discussed in this study. Richard Hooker's image with the hand gesture is also done in stained glass at the Chester Cathedral in England.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Richard_Hooker_(Stained_glass,_Chester_Cathedral).JPG)

[File:Richard_Hooker_\(Stained_glass,_Chester_Cathedral\).JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Richard_Hooker_(Stained_glass,_Chester_Cathedral).JPG)



Figure C24. Statue of Liberty

Xanthippe26. *Statue of Liberty*, own work, 2023. Digital photograph. Liberty Island, New York City, NY.

Image Information:

- Description: Photograph of the Statue of Liberty on Liberty Island, New York Harbor. Hidden hand gesture holding a book.
- Date: 2023
- Source: Wikimedia Commons — <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=154681513>
- Author: Xanthippe26
- License: CC BY-SA 4.0 (Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License)



Figure C25. Auguste Bartholdi in 1886

Jean Benner (1836–1909). Auguste Bartholdi in 1886, 1886. Painting, 787 × 1,024 pixels. Musée Bartholdi.

Image Information:

- Description: Portrait of Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, painted by Jean Benner, with hidden hand gesture.
- Date: 1886
- Source: Musée Bartholdi
- Author: Jean Benner
- License: Public domain (public domain in the United States and countries with copyright term ≤ 100 years after author's death)

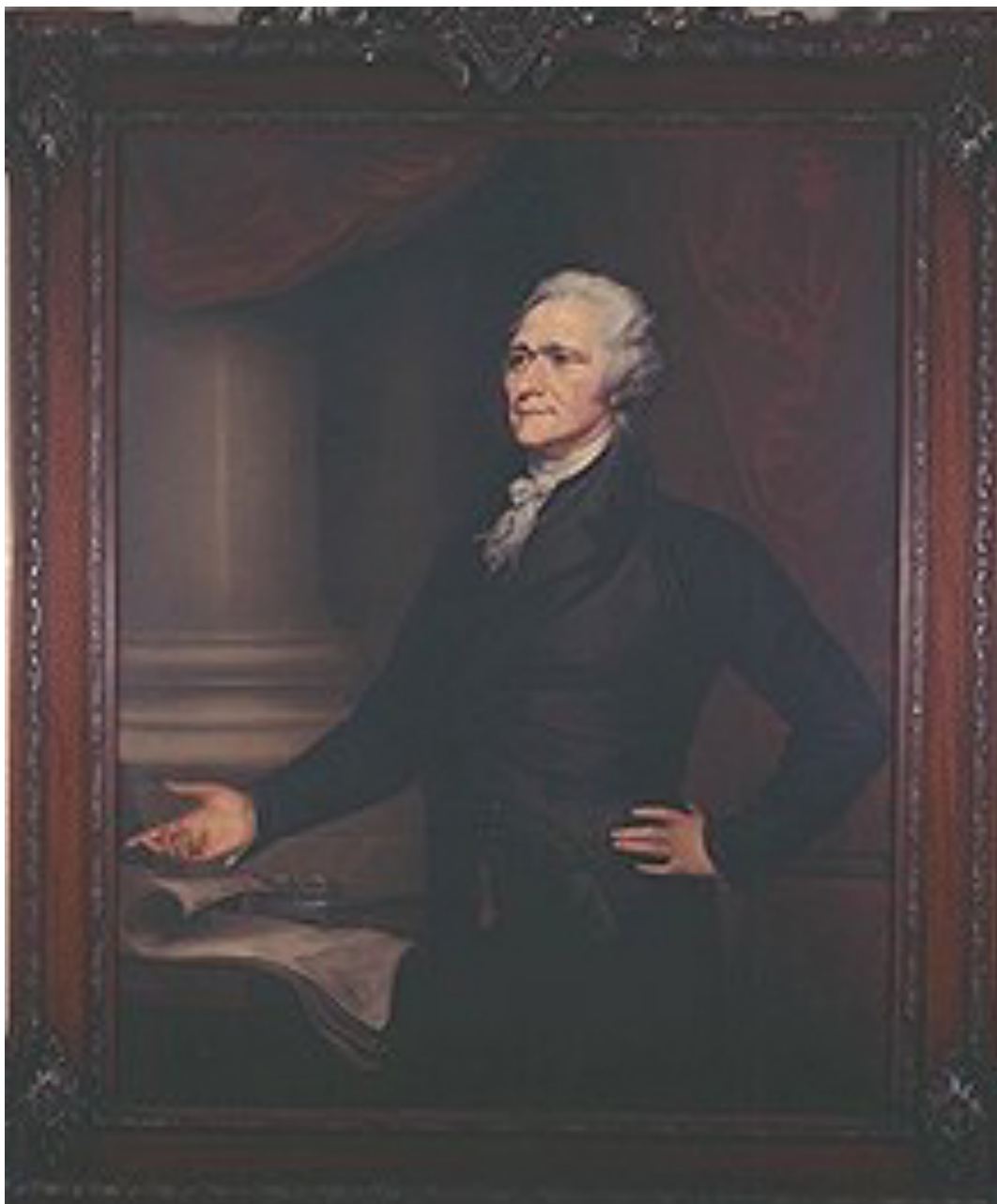


Figure C26. Alexander Hamilton — After John Trumbull

After John Trumbull. *Alexander Hamilton*, based on Trumbull's original portrait, c. late 18th–early 19th century. Oil on canvas. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Washington, D.C. Public domain.

<https://www.treasury.gov/about/history/Pages/ahamilton.aspx>Opens a new window

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=518478>

Appendix D. Priestly Blessing (Kohen) and Ritual Hand Gestures

Selected works illustrating the Kohen/priestly hand gesture, Shin symbolism, and related ritual configurations in art and visual culture.



Figure D1. Priestly Blessing, in the Synagogue of Enschede

Unknown artist.

Image Information:

- Description: Traditional hand gesture of the Kohanim (Jewish priests) used during the Priestly Blessing, with the middle and ring fingers separated to form a Shin-like

aperture. Popularized in modern culture as the “Vulcan salute.”

- Date: Various
- Source: Wikimedia Commons and historical Jewish sources
- Author: Various
- License: Public domain / Wikimedia Commons, as applicable

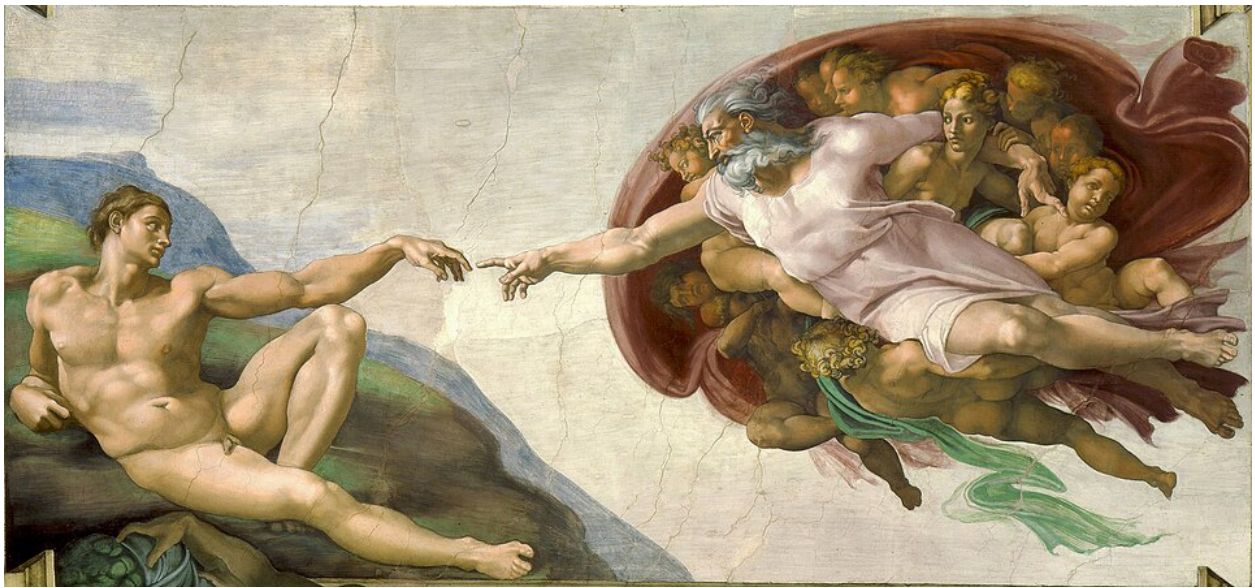


Figure D2. Shin Hand Gesture – The Creation of Adam, By Michelangelo

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564). *The Creation of Adam (detail)*, c. 1512. Fresco, Sistine Chapel, Vatican City.

Image Information:

- Description: Detail showing the paired middle and ring fingers of both Adam and God, evoking the Shin-like hand gesture central to this study.
- Date: c. 1512
- Source: Sistine Chapel, Vatican City
- Author: Michelangelo Buonarroti
- License: Public domain



Figure D3. Tefillin (Shel Yad), Close View

Yonkeltron (English Wikipedia contributor). *Tefillin-shel-yad.jpg*, 17 October 2007.

Image Information:

- Description: Close-up photograph of the tefillin *shel yad* (hand tefillin), showing the binding on the wearer's hand.
- Date: 2007
- Source: Wikimedia Commons
- Author: Yonkeltron
- License: CC BY 3.0



Figure D4. Woman in Blue Dress with Kohanim Hand Pose on Both Hands,
Singleton Copley — D (Different Code)

John Singleton Copley (1738–1815). *The Copley Family*, 1776–1777. Oil on canvas, 184.1 × 229.2 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Accession No. 1961.7.1.

Image Information:

- Description: Detail from *The Copley Family*, showing a woman in a blue dress depicted with both hands in the Kohanim (priestly blessing) pose, with the middle and ring fingers separated.
- Date: 1776–1777
- Source: National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. / Wikimedia Commons
- Author: John Singleton Copley

- License: Public domain (faithful photographic reproduction of a two-dimensional artwork)



Figure D5. Young Christopher Columbus, The Monteverde Statue (Genoa)
“The Boy Columbus”

Tassiano Daniele. *Giulio Monteverde’s Young Christopher Columbus*, 21 August 2015. Marble sculpture depicting a youthful Christopher Columbus seated on a bollard.

Image Information:

- Description: Photograph of Giulio Monteverde’s 1872 marble sculpture of a young Christopher Columbus seated on a harbor bollard
- Date: 21 August 2015
- Source: Wikimedia Commons — “Scultura di Giulio Monteverde del 1872 raffigurante un giovane Cristoforo Colombo ottocentesco seduto su una bitta del porto”
- Author: Tassiano Daniele
- License: Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0)



**Figure D6. A Genoese Noblewoman and Her Son, Anthony Van Dyck;
Noblewoman with D (Priestly Hand) and Son with A (Shin-Like).**

Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641). *A Genoese Noblewoman and Her Son*, c. 1626. Oil on canvas, 191.5 × 139.5 cm (75.3 × 54.9 in). National Gallery of Art — 1942.9.91.

Image Information:

- Gesture: Noblewoman with hand gesture “D” (Priestly Hand) and son with “A” (Shin-like configuration)
- Date: circa 1626
- Source: National Gallery of Art — <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/Collection/art-object-page.1230.html>
- Author: Anthony van Dyck
- License: Public domain (public domain in the United States and countries with copyright term ≤ 100 years after author’s death)